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TO A LADY PLAYING.

*(A hitherto unpublished poem from the papers of Leigh Hunt
in the possession of MR. TOWNSHEND MAYER.)*

ONCE more among those rich and golden strings
Wander with thy warm arm, dear girl, so pale ;
And when at last from thy sweet discord springs
The aerial music, like the dreams which veil
Earth's shadows with diviner thoughts and things,
O, let the passion and the time prevail !
And bid thy spirit through the mazes run ;
For Music is like Love,—and must be won !
O, wake the rich chords with thy delicate fingers !
O, loose the enchanted music from mute sleep !
Methinks the fine phantasma near thee lingers,
Yet will not come, unless tones strong and deep
Compel him. Ah ! methinks (as love avengers
Requite upon the heads of those who weep
The sorrows which they gave) the sullen thing
Deserts thee—as *thou* left'st the vanquish'd string.
No—no ; it comes—sweeter than death, or life ;
Sweeter than hope or joy (beneath the moon) ;
Sweeter than all is that harmonious strife,
From whose embrace is born a perfect tune,
Where every passionate note with thought is rife.
Come then—with golden speech enchant us soon,
Soon as thou wilt—with airs of hope, with fears,
The rage of passion, or the strength of tears !

B. W. Procter.

STUDIES IN POETRY.

CHAPTER II.

Union of Poetry and Music—The Bards—Rhythm—Sound the echo to the Sense: illustrations—Shelley, Milton, Scott—Metre in Quantity; specimen from Mr. Tennyson—Nature of Accentual Metre—How Varieties of metre are formed.

IN the earliest ages Music and Poetry were one. The poet was also the musician. Man we may suppose is designed as musical: certain it is that among the Greeks, the Welsh, the Germans a separate class, known commonly as Bards, was equally and uniformly established. In all cases these minstrels were held in the highest veneration. In the most sanguinary wars the person of the bard was esteemed sacred; he was honoured by the people; he was the favoured guest of princes. Sometimes these men wandered from city to city, singing their lays and received with cordial hospitality; in other instances they seem to have been attached to certain tribes. Homer in the *Odyssey* has drawn in few words his inimitable picture of Demodocus, the blind bard* who, in the court of King Alcinous, was summoned that he might sing before Ulysses. I will select a passage. The monarch has instructed the herald to "call the divine bard Demodocus, for to him the deity has granted song exceedingly, to delight in whatever his mind incites him to sing. We may pause to notice how the Father of Poetry here recognizes song as a divine endowment; in strict accordance, too, with an assertion found in yet another book, that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning"—(James i., 17). The greater the poet or indeed the man, the more reverent he is certain to be; undue trust in one's own personal capacity, irreverence, and vainglory were regarded (how frequent soever in our improved age) as gigantic evils by those virtuous men of remote antiquity. But to

* It has been aptly remarked "the blindness of bards is almost proverbial." So, too, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, iii. 32:—

Nor sometimes forget
Those other two, equall'd with me in fate,
So were I equalled with them in renown,
Blind Thamyras and blind Mæonides,
And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old."

return from a perhaps pardonable digression. "And the herald came near, leading the harmonious bard, whom the Muse loved exceedingly; but she gave him both good and evil: she deprived him indeed of his eyes, but gave him sweet song. For him Pontonous placed a silver-studded throne in the middle of the guests, leaning it against a tall pillar: and from a peg the herald had hung the clear toned harp over his head, and taught him how to take it with his hands: and near him he placed a basket, and a beautiful table, and near him a cup of wine to drink, when his mind should incite him." The banquet then takes place, and after it the Lay of Demodocus, which, as a recital of the Trojan theme, moved the unrecognised but mighty Ulysses himself to tears. He wept—he, not a man likely to be lightly moved. The bards by their wonderful combination of poetry and music impelled their listeners to deeds of valour, or at will stirred the softer sentiments of love or pity.* Contests, moreover, as to skill in their divine art were organized; and these, which again originated doubtless in a later date, may have furnished some passing suggestion for the Welsh Eisteddfod or national gathering, by which the patriots of Wales seek to encourage and perpetuate the venerable language of the Britons.

It does not, however, belong to the province of the present series of papers to trace with minuteness, nor indeed at all, the course of early poetic invention. According to a passage in Aristotle's Poetics, the earliest subjects of composition were epic and satiric. Not content with celebrating the deeds of their heroes, men—such ever is human nature—must perforce begin to abuse and take off each other. Whether satire indeed is intrinsically poetry—though it may wear an attractive poetic form—may certainly be questioned. It arose in human hatred,† in rage like that of a mad dog, and cannot as a subject be regarded as very exalted. In time the earlier minstrel's occupation was supplanted or set aside

* Homer's heroes under the influence of strong emotion yielded at times to the natural impulses of grief. So, too, in the Biblical narrative, and one may add in early literature generally. There is a fine passage about this in Mr. Gladstone's book *Juventus Mundi*. Not having the book at hand, I cannot exactly refer; but it much struck me.

† "Archilochum proprio rabies armavit iambo."—*Horat. de Arte Poet*, 79.

by the stately services of the Ode, in which poetry and music were still united, and the variations of strophe and antistrophe* were indicated by the measured movements of living performers. From the Ode, again, sprang the Drama, in which the dialogue was ingrafted on the Chorus; and hence, ultimately, the fair alliance was severed, and the poet and the musician followed distinct professions.

The poets had now to cultivate for themselves *Rhythm* and *Metre*. We are now traversing fields less pleasant, but it is necessary to explain and distinguish terms so important in the poetic art. Rhythm differs from metre, inasmuch as rhythm is proportion, applied to any motion whatever; whereas metre is proportion applied to the motion of words spoken. Thus, in the drumming of a march, or the dancing of a hornpipe, there is rhythm, though no metre; in Dryden's celebrated Ode there is metre as well as rhythm, because the poet with the rhythm has associated certain words. And hence it follows that, though *all metre is rhythm*, yet *all rhythm is not metre*. No English word, says Harris, expresses rhythm better than the word *time*. Time as applied to words is metre. This is a somewhat thorny statement; but it will on reflection soon become perfectly clear, and, after all, a little extra mental cogitation does one immense service occasionally.

Furthermore, a sense or perception of rhythm is the secret of the whole art of poetry. The poetic sentiment indeed cannot be taught by rule, but the practice of the art requires a very exact rule, and above all a musical ear—without which it is manifestly impossible either to construct and nicely balance or to count cadences, to regulate the recurrence of the metrical *feet*. Shakespeare has told us that—

A man who has no music in his soul
Is fit for treason, stratagems and snares.

But whatever he may be fit or unfit for, he will never be manufactured into a poet. It is the lack of the power of what we may call the musical notation of words which allows many worthy people to send to journals and magazines lines which will not flow,

* Donaldson's Theatre of the Greeks. Gillies Hist. Greece, I., 276. The English reader may compare Blackie's *Æschylus*, and may peruse also the rhythmic march of Atalanta in Calydon by Mr. Swinburne.

and verses which have no feet to go on. It is the lack of the musical sense, too, in calculating the power of a word to a nicety that has given us the whole tribe of aimless versifiers as apart from the true sons of song. These persons beat the air in vain; their work will never come to anything—unless as Byron once jocosely said, to furnish the linings of trunks! On the other hand, it is the possession of the musical faculty which lends its charm of sound, its fascination, its genuine ring, to the productions of authentic poets. If this vocal fascination is united—as unfortunately it has *not* always been—to sentiments of a lofty kind, then the poetry is at its highest attainable point of excellence. It is this beauty—this curious combination of sentiment and sound—that we find in only our greatest poets.

Before discussing the subject of Metre and its varieties, I know not that I can anywhere introduce better than in this connection, while mentioning rhythm and melody, a few rare instances of the exact fitting of the *word* to the *thought* by the most intimate and harmonious blending. Many of our English words are formed according to the ideas they represent—they retain the sound.* Such for example are *crash*, *dash*, *thud*, *murmur*, *placid*, and a troop of others. Homer by two Greek words expresses the very surging of the waves. But over sustained passages of verse to keep up the beautiful illusion—that *the sound may be the echo to the sense* is a lofty poetic triumph. Even a popular hymn writer, amid a whole heap of bald verse, has the following exquisite gem:—

Thy words O Lord, the waves control
And rule the boisterous deep;
Thou mak'st the sleeping billows roll,
The rolling billows sleep.—WATTS.

Where the sound of the words employed aptly express the alterations of tumult and calm.

Or Gray, one of the most polished of our poets:—

Woods that wave o'er Delphi's steep,
Isles that crown th' Ægean deep,
Fields that cool Ilissus laves,
Or where *Mæander's* amber waves,
In lingering labyrinths creep — *Progress of Poesy.*

* Onomatopœia.

Suggesting the calm placid flow of the river. The judicious use of the liquid letters (and the final syllables of Meander amber) express this very beautifully. One can almost see the river flowing majestically but quietly at our feet.

Or Shelley, describing the horrors of a siege :—

Now swells the intermingling din ; the jar
Frequent and frightful of the bursting bomb ;
The *falling beam, the shriek, the groan, the shout,*
The ceaseless clangor and the rush of men
Inebriate with rage : loud and more loud
The discord grows ; till pale *Death shuts the scene,*
And o'er the conqueror and the conquered draws
His cold and bloody shroud.— Queen Mab.

The very contrast of sound in the later and the earlier lines indicates the terrible change of situation.

Or Sir Walter Scott, when describing the splendid onset of the Bruce at Bannockburn :—

Bruce, with the pilot's wary eye
The slackening of the storm could spy.
"One effort more, and Scotland's free !
Lord of the Isles, my trust in thee
Is firm as Ailsa rock ;
Rush on with Highland sword and targe,
I, with my Carrick spearmen charge
Now, forward to the shock !" *At once the spears were forward thrown,*
Against the sun the broadswords shone ;
The pibroch lent its maddening tone,
And loud King Robert's voice was known—
"Carrick press on—they fail, they fail !
Press on, brave sons of Innisgail,
The foe is fainting fast !
Each strike for parent, child, and wife,
For Scotland, liberty, and life,—
The battle cannot last !"

Lord of the Isles, Canto VI., 28.

In the *italicised* lines we have not only the magnificent energy of description, which so astute a critic as Lord Jeffrey regarded as quite Homeric, but, in particular, we can hardly fail to note the manifest presence of the principle which I am engaged in illustrating. The words are so collocated as when tolerably well read, to convey the idea (in the *sound* alone, be it observed, and wholly apart if need be from the meaning,) of the events and movements

they celebrate. Manifestly, it requires great poetic power and great musical sensibility to perform what may be called these wonders among words.*

Rhythm, it has been already said, applied to words is that which constitutes metre. And the metre (or measure) consists in a certain regulated recurrence (1,) of long or short vowels by virtue of *Quantity*; or (2,) in a like recurrence of accented and unaccented syllables, at a regular interval, in what are usually denominated *feet*. But this brings us to a consideration of Accent and Quantity; of their several sorts of arrangement—as in heroic, octosyllabic, or other verse: matters which can be introduced only in the present paper.

In ordinary European words, one syllable is pronounced with a peculiar stress of the voice, and is then said to be accented. In our own language the most obvious accompaniment of this stress on the syllable is a greater clearness of sound in the vowel; insomuch that a *very* short vowel cannot take the primary accent in English. Nevertheless, it is very far from the truth, that accented vowels and syllables are necessarily long, or longer than the unaccented in the same word. In illustration, however, of the loss of clearness in a vowel occasioned by a loss of accent, we may compare a *contest* (noun) with to *contest* (verb); or *equal* with *equality*, in which the syllables *con* and *qual* are sounded with a very obscure vowel when unaccented.

Even after the word accent has been thus limited, there is an ambiguity in the term; it has still a double sense, according to which we name it either oratorical or vocabular. By the latter we mean the accent in which a word in isolation receives, while by oratorical accent we understand that which words actually have when read aloud or spoken as parts of a sentence. In the present connection it is with the *oratorical* accent alone that our subject is concerned. We must add that the entire doctrine of accent and quantity is shrouded in obscurity. For our present purpose, however, it may suffice to define accent as stress in a syllable, and quantity as the time (long or short) occupied in its utterance. It is extensively maintained that accent also played a

* See also the Fall of Mulciber (Vulcan) "*sheer o'er the crystal battlements.*"—*Paradise Lost*, Book I., lines—738—746.

considerable part in the formation of the classical metres ; however this may be they are dominated by quantity. On the other hand in our English verses the recurrence of accent is the ruling principle.

But one illustration is worth for practical purposes a ton of discourses, which are in these cases apt to become somewhat tedious. The reader's trained ear will quickly and with tolerable correctness appreciate the distinction between a quantitative and an accentual metre when we place before him a poem, done according to quantity, by no less eminent a person than Mr. Tennyson* :—

HENDECASYLLABICS.†

O you chorus of indolent reviewers,
Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,
Lo, I come to the test, a tiny poem
All composed in a metre of Catullus,
All in quantity, careful of my motion,
Like the skater on ice that hardly bears him,
Lest I fall unawares before the people,
Waking laughter in indolent reviewers,
Should I flounder awhile without a tumble.
Through this metrification of Catullus,
They should speak to me not without a welcome,
All that chorus of indolent reviewers.
Hard, hard, hard it is only not to tumble,
So fantastical is the dainty metre.
Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor believe me
Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers.
O blatant magazines, regard me rather—
Since I blush to belaud myself a moment—
As some rare little rose, a piece of inmost
Horticultural art. or half coquette-like
Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly.

This is a graceful trifle, an elegant curiosity, but it is nothing more. To our English ears the “Latian echoes” are alien. This pleasant illustration may teach the reader, through his ears, the

* *Enoch Arden*, &c., edition of 1864. To this edition are appended a few poems bearing the suggestive title of *Experiments*. These are written in Quantity—Milton (alcaics) ; Hendecasyllabics—the one cited above. Any reader caring to investigate the questions alluded to in the text will find much valuable information in the *Journal of Education*, 1832, and in Mr Newman's exhaustive exposition in *Kitto's Cyclopædia*, from which the author has selected in drawing up the present paper.

† Meaning lines of eleven syllables, a favourite metre with Catullus, and well adapted for elegant trifles.

enormous difference between verse regulated by quantity, like the above specimen, and verse regulated by accent like our own. We may perhaps in passing pause to remark that this sense of alienation, if not of positive uncouthness, determines the futility of any presentment of classic versions in such fashion, at least when designed for *popular* perusal. Lord Lytton's *Horace*—which, however, is by no means servile in its imitative renderings—can hardly become a popular book for this very reason. Contrast the fine, genial, poetic, wholly English flow of Theodore Martin.

Let us take a verse and count the syllables, duly noting those that are accented :—

Then fare thee well, mine own dear love,
The world hath now for us
No greater grief, no pain above
The pain of parting thus.—MOORE.

Here the syllables accented are 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28; that is, every other syllable.

Again :—

At the close of the day, when the hamlet is still,
And the mortals the sweets of forgetfulness prove,
And when nought but the torrent is heard on the hill,
And there's nought but the nightingale's song in the grove.—BEATTIE.

Here the syllables accented are 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, 30, 33, 36, 39, 42, 45, 48; or every third syllable.

Every variety of metre is precisely the recurrence of accented syllables similarly affected within certain intervals or at a certain distance. According to the precise variety, verse is denominated Anapaestic, Trochaic, Heroic, Octosyllabic, &c. But these varieties of verse we reserve for a future paper.

Of course we have here been discussing English verse only or chiefly. Metre, for example, has other governing principles than accent or than quantity: our Anglo-Saxon, or rather English remote ancestors measured their verses by a species of *Alliteration*. The Hebrew poetry is characterised by parallels of *ideas*. Any curious reader seeking enlightenment on the poetry of our remote ancestors may turn to the Saxon poem of *Beowulf*, of which a valuable edition has lately appeared under the editorship of Mr. Thomas Arnold.

T. H. GIBSON.

ODE TO MUSIC.

SINCE, Music, first thou didst inspire
Old Lamech's son with heav'nly fire!
Since o'er his wrapt, impassioned soul,
The wave of sound divine didst roll!

Or since the hollow reeds of Nile,
Soft singing to the wanton wind,
Taught harmony of plaintive style
To Osiris' scribe, and turned his mind—
Thou ever hast the souls of men subdued,
Or hast with passions fresh their intellect imbued.

In stirring odes the northern chief,
Gave to his fiery soul relief;
The British harpers sadly swept
The chords; around them women wept,
And loud lamented to behold,
On battlefield their warriors die,
To see their columns backward rolled,
And from the conquering foemen fly,
Whilst on the heights with melancholy wail,
The harpers sweep the strings—alas! without avail.

Hark! how with spirit-stirring sound,
The pibroch's rugged strains rebound
From hill to hill! Now, wildly loud,
They rend the air with music proud,
Now seem melodiously to mourn
Their fate who bravely fighting fall,
Who ne'er shall to their homes return,—
And for their death due vengeance call;
Again their comrades to the battle fly,
Inspired with frenzy, wild to conquer or to die.

The organ's voice majestic swells
As to th' adoring crowd it tells
Of angel choirs beyond the skies,
And bids the grateful hymn arise;

'Tis then that o'er our spirits steal,
 Blest inspiration from above,
 Almost the joys of heaven we feel,
 And lose our cares in holy love;
 Thus music o'er the mind of man doth reign,
 The partner of his joy, the healer of his pain.

His lyre to Phrygian metres strung,
 The Grecian poet Orpheus sung;
 And with the sweetness of his strain,
 Melted the heart of Death, tho' vain
 His labour proved.—So great a spell
 Had Lydian measures o'er the heart,
 That those who listened loved too well,
 And from their chains could never part;
 Thus in the land of Greece did Music live
 And to the art of song her softening influence give.

GERALD C. DRURY.

A LITTLE WHILE.

A LITTLE while, you said, with a smile,
 We part—
 And the days drift by, with tear and sigh,
 And still we are parted, you and I
 Sweetheart.

With each new day, I still softly say
 We'll meet,
 And listen long for thy voice of song—
 But time is cruel, and fate is strong
 My sweet.

The lights grow dim, tho' remembrance hymn
 Thy praise,
 Love broods alone by a cold hearth-stone,
 And knows in dreams he will meet alone
 My gaze.

By the Author of "Song Drifts."

THE POETS OF AMERICA.

I.—HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

IN the age of seed-time and expectation, pending the appearance of intellectual giants in the United States, it is yet not without interest that we consider what those young States have hitherto achieved in literature. And, first, it is scarcely surprising that in intellectual thought and poetic power America should still lie far behind the mother-country. Only some two centuries have elapsed since the "May Flower," bearing on board the sturdy forefathers of the great Republic, touched American shores and deposited its living freight. The seed then sown in sadness, transplanted from English soil, has since become a great nation; but its literary roots have not yet struck deep into the earth; and in all probability centuries more must elapse before the world receives its Trans-atlantic Bacon or Shakespeare, if indeed such mighty growths are again possible. The intellectual activity of America is very great, and the appreciation of its people for that which is noble in literature widely diffused, but hitherto few works of the first order have been generated in her midst. Turning to the development of the poetic faculty, if genius in this direction in the United States be not of the highest order, it possesses at any rate all the elements of popularity. The first of the two poets whom I have chosen for consideration in this paper has a wider suffrage than even Alfred Tennyson. Into every part of the habitable globe some of the lyrics of Longfellow have penetrated, and if much cannot be said for their depth or profundity, the spirit which permeates them all is excellent and pure, and calculated to lift humanity out of its misery and degradation.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the psalmist amongst modern poets, numbers, as I have already indirectly indicated, more readers than any other living singer. When we look for the causes of this we are for the moment somewhat perplexed: in intellectuality and subtlety he is behind many poets in his own country, and certainly behind all the leading poets of England; and we are driven to his simplicity, alike in thought and expression, for the explanation of his enormous popularity. Taking as his text the simplest thing in nature, or the most common

operations of her hand, he is able to invest each and all with interest for the human soul. He has a direct method, one pursued without artifice, of appealing to the emotional nature of man, and those who are astonished at the apparent lack of depth in his works, will find in this fact much to account for that other fact, that Longfellow has become a "household word" in our midst. And who shall say that the power which he possesses is a mean one in its exercise? The influence of all great teachers over the multitude has been in proportion to their capacity of enabling the people to grasp the substance of their teaching by the simplicity of their method. So with Longfellow: he has diligently striven to make himself understood, and has probably been rewarded beyond his most sanguine anticipations.

This poet was born at Portland, in the State of Maine, in the year 1807, and comes of an honourable stock, his father being the Hon. Stephen Longfellow, who was descended from William Longfellow—a gentleman born in Hampshire, England, in 1653, but who emigrated in consequence of the disturbed condition of the country. Longfellow's mother was descended from the well-known settler, John Alden, who went over to America in the "May Flower." Entering himself at Bowdoin College in his fifteenth year, Longfellow graduated four years afterwards. He was intended for the profession of the law, but drifted into literature. He travelled a great deal, and having a marvellous faculty for the acquisition of languages, he speedily became one of the greatest linguists of his age. In 1835 he was elected to the professorship of Belles Lettres in Harvard University. As the result of his travels, his admirers received from his pen several volumes of exquisite prose romances, *Hyperion*, *Kavanagh*, and *Outre Mer*. Mr. Longfellow has visited Europe on three separate occasions; the last in 1842. He has been twice married. After holding his professorship at Harvard for nearly twenty years, he retired in 1854, and from that time to the present has sedulously devoted himself to literary work exclusively. The house wherein most of his books have been written, possesses a further interest in that it was formerly the home of George Washington.

Besides the prose works to which I have referred, Mr. Longfellow wrote many articles in the *North American Review*,

which held the position in the States that the leading quarterlies occupy in the literature of this country. The poetic cast of his thought is perceptible in the essay he contributed to the already-mentioned *Review* upon Sir Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesy*. His most natural form of expression, however, is verse, and in this he excelled from his youth. It is not always that the work which a poet accomplishes in his teens is worthy of preservation, far from it; but before the age of nineteen Longfellow had written much respecting which—upon republication—he was quite justified in saying, with the Bishop of Avranches—"I cannot be displeased to see these children of mine, which I have neglected, and almost exposed, brought from their wanderings in lanes and alleys, and safely lodged, in order to go forth into the world together in a more decorous garb." I give, as an example of genuine precocity, the following stanzas, entitled "An April Day," which were composed before the poet had attained his sixteenth year:—

When the warm sun, that brings
Seed-time and harvest, has returned again,
'Tis sweet to visit the still wood, where springs
The first flower of the plain.

I love the season well,
When forest glades are teeming with bright forms,
Nor dark and many folded clouds foretell
The coming-on of storms.

From the earth's loosened mould
The sapling draws its sustenance, and thrives;
Though stricken to the heart with winter's cold,
The drooping tree revives.

The softly-warbled song
Comes from the pleasant woods, and coloured wings
Glance quick in the bright sun, that moves along
The forest openings.

When the bright sunset fills
The silver woods with light, the green slope throws
Its shadows in the hollows of the hills,
And wide the upland glows.

And, when the eve is born,
In the blue lake the sky, o'er reaching far,
Is hollowed out, and the moon dips her horn,
And twinkles many a star.

Inverted in the tide,
Stand the gray rocks, and trembling shadows throw,
And the fair trees look over, side by side,
And see themselves below.

Sweet April!—many a thought
 Is wedded unto thee, as hearts are wed;
 Nor shall they fail, till, to its autumn brought,
 Life's golden fruit is shed.

Nearly forty years ago, a leading critical journal observed of our author—"The poetry of Mr. Longfellow is marked by a very vivid imagination, great susceptibility to the impressions of natural scenery, and a ready perception of the analogies between natural objects and the feelings of the human heart. But, besides this, he possesses an extraordinary command over the powers of language, and turns it to any form at will:—

Untwisting all the chains that tie
 The hidden soul of harmony."

Longfellow rapidly obtained the public ear, and received also the warm approval of the critics, although there were not wanting individual depreciators of his talent—these being discovered, unfortunately, amongst the practisers of the same divine art. I shall not follow the poet through the whole of his lyrics, many of which are too widely known to need even mentioning. There is a fervid moral glow about such poems as "Excelsior" and the "Psalm of Life," which, upon the first reading, precludes criticism upon their defects—and defects they undoubtedly possess. But they are calculated to be helpful to many a struggling spirit, bearing the message of hope in the midst of despair to the human soul. Longfellow's is a cheerful muse, though, with all poets, he has his moments of sadness. He is exceedingly rapid in production. The "Psalm of Life" was written at a sitting, one bright summer's morning, and just after the poet had sustained, or rather was recovering from, a deep affliction. "Excelsior" was written in even a shorter space of time, and the magnificent ballad, the "Wreck of the Hesperus," was the result of one night's sitting, after a terrible storm. All the world is familiar with "The Village Blacksmith," and men have been made better by such lessons as that taught in "The Light of Stars." The writer thus apostrophises the red planet Mars:—

O star of Strength! I see thee stand
 And smile upon my pain;
 Thou beckonest with thy mailed hand,
 And I am strong again.

Within my breast there is no light
 But the cold light of stars ;
 I give the first watch of the night
 To the red planet Mars.

The star of the unconquered will,
 He rises in my breast,
 Serene, and resolute, and still,
 And calm, and self-possessed.

And thou, too, whosoe'er thou art,
 That readest this brief psalm,
 As one by one thy hopes depart,
 Be resolute and calm.

O fear not in a world like this,
 And thou shalt know ere long,
 Know how sublime a thing it is
 To suffer and be strong.

These verses are illustrative of one of Longfellow's greatest excellences—viz., his moral teaching, which is omnipresent in his writings. Sometimes he takes the deeper, softer emotions of the human heart, and plays upon them with strong but quiet force, as in the stanzas "The Day is Done," and the "Footsteps of Angels," which contain some of his most beautiful imagery. In "Resignation" he touches another chord, that of the pathetic, and few have shown a greater mastery over the music of sorrow. He strives after and insists upon universal brotherhood, the brotherhood of suffering and of joy. He teaches the lessons of death, outwardly those of despair, but full of a hidden meaning instinct with hope—that it is the office of the poet to bring forth and set strongly in the light on behalf of humanity. Then he reaches a yet even higher strain, as when he visits the Arsenal at Springfield, and thus gives utterance to the thoughts and aspirations which move within him :—

Were half the power that fills the world with terror,
 Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,
 Given to redeem the human mind from error,
 There were no need of arsenals nor forts :

The warrior's name would be a name abhorred !
 And every nation that should lift again
 Its hand against a brother, on its forehead
 Would wear for evermore the curse of Cain !

Down the dark future, through long generations,
 The echoing sounds grow fainter and then cease ;
 And like a bell, with solemn sweet vibrations,
 I hear once more the voice of Christ say, " Peace !"

Peace ! and no longer from its brazen portals
 The blast of war's great organ shakes the skies !
 But beautiful as songs of the immortals,
 The holy melodies of love arise.

“The Building of the Ship” to be called “The Union,” is a fine outburst of the poet's patriotism, as well as one of the most charming of his lyrics. The similitude of the vessel to the State is well preserved and dwelt upon, and the launching of the ship graphically depicted. Then comes the final comparison and adjuration, ranking amongst the most effective passages of the whole of Longfellow's works :—

Thou too, sail on, O ship of State,
 Sail on, O Union, strong and great !
 Humanity with all its fears,
 With all the hopes of future years,
 Is hanging breathless on thy fate !
 We know what Master laid thy keel,
 What workmen wrought thy ribs of steel ;
 Who made each mast, and sail, and rope ;
 What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
 In what a forge and what a heat
 Were shaped the anchors of thy hope !
 Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
 'Tis of the wave and not the rock ;
 'Tis but the flapping of the sail,
 And not a rent made by the gale !
 In spite of rock and tempest's roar,
 In spite of false lights on the shore,
 Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea !
 Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee.
 Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
 Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
 Are all with thee—are all with thee !

Longfellow's abhorrence of slavery was not exceeded by that of any of the earnest abolitionists of America. His Christianity and his natural feelings and sentiments alike revolted from the hateful practice. He heartily joined in the efforts of Channing and others to sweep slavery from the States, and had the satisfaction of welcoming a happy result to their united labours. Much contumely had to be met by those who early expressed themselves enemies of the nefarious traffic in human lives, but Longfellow's courage would be equal to greater calls upon it than this. Like another poet of his own time and country, J. G. Whittier, the author of *Hiawatha* threw himself into the conflict, and wrote a series of

poems upon slavery, full of moral indignation, and charged with the electric current of sympathy with the oppressed. He perceived the danger of the traffic to the commonwealth, and addressed a spirited warning to his countrymen, comparing the poor and despised slave with Samson, who might one day rise and avenge himself on his enemies, pulling down the pillars of the State. But the right prevailed, and America has the satisfaction of now being—what till the emancipation she could only pretend to be—the land of perfect freedom and righteous government.

Considering Longfellow as a descriptive and dramatic poet, we are struck by his superior excellence in the former direction. He is very facile in depicting the moods of nature, but when he comes to handling human passions, he cannot so project himself into his various characters as to make his essays in the dramatic art successful. How much more admirable, for instance, is his "Evangeline" than "The Spanish Student." The former is written in the descriptive form, and a quotation from the Introduction will show how all the imagery and powers of assimilation manifested by the poet come into play:—

This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks,
Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight,
Stand like Druids of old, with voices sad and prophetic,
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms.
Loud from its rocky caverns the deep-voiced neighbouring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the forest.

This is the forest primeval; but where are the hearts that beneath it
Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the woodland the voice of the
 hunter?

Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of Arcadian farmers,
Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water the woodlands,
Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an image of Heaven?
Waste are those pleasant farms, and the farmers for ever departed!
Scattered like dust and leaves, when the mighty blasts of October
Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle them far o'er the ocean.
Nought but tradition remains of the beautiful village of Grand-Pré.

Ye who believe in affection that hopes, and endures, and is patient,
Ye who believe in the beauty and strength of woman's devotion,
List to the mournful tradition still sung by the pines of the forest,
List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, the home of the happy.

The historical incidents upon which this beautiful legendary poem is founded are well known. The inhabitants of Acadie—now

Nova Scotia—having been suspected of giving assistance to the French—their ancestors—by the British Government, were exiled from their homes under circumstances of great hardship, and distributed over other English colonies. The poet has woven a pathetic narrative out of the sufferings of some of these expatriated people, and it stands forth one of his most admirable conceptions. It is full of exquisite similes and the most tender and delicate touches of description. The love of Gabriel and Evangeline, with its tragic ending, is wrought out with genuine pathos. “The Golden Legend” is full of excellence, but does not reach the height of the previous poem, probably owing to the fact of its being cast in the dramatic mould. The same observation applies still more strongly to “The Spanish Student,” though it is distinguished by beautiful thoughts. The characters, however, fail to convince us of their individuality; in fact, we only see the poet repeating himself in various forms, and uttering his reflections under various guises. The work is not without either passion or insight, but the poet’s gift is not a dramatic one, and he has accordingly been unable to make the best of his story. Had he thrown it into a form more natural with him, it would in all probability have been amongst the most striking and popular of his pieces. Let any one read this drama through, and he must notice how the poet fails to attain his natural voice as compared with his achievements in lyrical poetry. It is in the short series of stanzas that we discover Longfellow’s most perfect art. How many living writers, for instance, have given us better ballads than his “Victor Galbraith?” Victor Galbraith was a young soldier who had been shot in Mexico for some breach of discipline. Longfellow thus sings of his death (with which a singular legend was connected), in true and effective strains:—

Under the walls of Monterey
 At daybreak the bugles began to play,
 Victor Galbraith!
 In the mist of the morning damp and gray,
 These were the words they seemed to say,—
 “Come forth to thy death,
 Victor Galbraith!”
 Forth he came with a martial tread;
 Firm was his step, erect his head;
 Victor Galbraith!

He who so well the bugle played
 Could not mistake the words it said—
 "Come forth to thy death,
 Victor Galbraith!"

He looked at the earth, he looked at the sky,
 He looked at the files of musketry,
 Victor Galbraith!
 And he said, with a steady voice and eye,
 "Take good aim, I am ready to die!"
 Thus challenges death,
 Victor Galbraith!

Twelve fiery tongues flashed straight and red,
 Six leaden balls on their errand sped;
 Victor Galbraith!
 Falls to the ground, but he is not dead;
 His name was not stamped on those balls of lead,
 And they only scathe
 Victor Galbraith!

Three balls were in his breast and brain,
 But he rises out of the dust again,
 Victor Galbraith!
 The water he drinks has a bloody stain;
 "O kill me and put me out of my pain!"
 In his agony prayeth
 Victor Galbraith!

Forth dart once more those tongues of flame,
 And the bugler has died a death of shame,
 Victor Galbraith!
 His soul has gone back to whence it came,
 And no one answers to the name,
 When the Sergeant saith,
 "Victor Galbraith!"

Under the walls of Monterey,
 By night a bugle is heard to play,
 Victor Galbraith!
 Through the mist of the valley damp and gray,
 The sentinels hear the sound, and say,
 "That is the wraith
 Of Victor Galbraith!"

It is obvious, I think, that in such lyrics as this we find the highest exhibition of Longfellow's genius, notwithstanding that he has given us several long narrative poems of sustained power. Amongst these latter is *Hiawatha*, which deservedly sprang into great favour immediately after its appearance, and numbers amongst its admirers the most erudite as well as the most illiterate

of readers. It has been described as an Indian Edda, and is not unworthy of the designation. All its pictures are redolent of the people and scenery it professes to describe. The poem is founded on a tradition prevalent among the North American Indians, of a personage of miraculous birth, who was sent among them to clear their rivers, forests, and fishing grounds, and to teach them the arts of peace. The scene of the poem is laid among the Ojibways on the southern shore of Lake Superior, and into the chief legend Mr. Longfellow has woven other inferior but curious Indian traditions. Grand and picturesque in river and mountain scenery, the whole country has afforded magnificent scope for the poet's descriptive powers. Amongst other narrative poems by this writer worthy of fuller mention than I can give to them within the limits of this paper is *The Courtship of Miles Standish*. This is the less to be regretted, however, as my readers are probably already quite as familiar with them as they are with the shorter poems from the same hand.

Within the last three or four years Mr. Longfellow has published no fewer than three volumes of verse, all of which have added to his previously established reputation. Not, perhaps, so popular in style as his early lyrics they are richer and mellower in thought, while there is in them a fuller and more perfect voice. The *Tales of a Wayside Inn* are charged with moral lessons of much import, and related in flowing and easy versification. *Judas Maccabæus*, a drama, shows a greater command of blank verse than *The Spanish Student*, but it lacks the higher dramatic qualities. In *Aftermath*, published in 1873, Longfellow continues his *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, with a success equal to that of the former series. In this volume also, are several miscellaneous poems of much merit. To quote three stanzas called "The Brook of the Wave:"—

The brooklet came from the mountain,
As sang the bard of old,
Running with feet of silver
Over the sands of gold!

Far away in the briny ocean
There rolled a turbulent wave,
Now singing along the sea-beach,
Now howling along the cave.

And the brooklet has found the billow,
 Though they flowed so far apart,
 And has filled with its freshness and sweetness
 That bitter, turbulent heart!

The title of the volume is drawn from the concluding stanzas. The poet, after singing for half a century his songs for the benefit of mankind, at last gathers in the *Aftermath*. He has garnered long ago the first fresh crop, and now goes over the fields of poesy again for the second fruition :—

When the Summer fields are mown,
 When the birds are fledged and flown,
 And the dry leaves strew the path ;
 With the falling of the snow,
 With the cawing of the crow,
 Once again the fields we mow,
 And gather in the *Aftermath*.
 Not the sweet new grass with flowers
 Is this harvesting of ours ;
 Not the upland clover bloom :
 But the rowen mixed with weeds,
 Tangled tufts from marsh and meads,
 Where the poppy drops its seeds
 In the silence and the gloom.

The poet never produced finer work than is witnessed in his latest volume of all, *The Masque of Pandora, and other Poems*, though here again the greatest excellence is perceived in the shorter pieces. The graceful poem, *Morituri Salutamus*, was written for the fiftieth anniversary of the class of 1825 in Bowdoin College, and is a touching remembrance of departed days. Longfellow was greatly attached to the distinguished statesman Charles Sumner, and the verses he indited at his death are worthy of the two friends. I cannot do better than extract a few of these :—

His was the troubled life,
 The conflict and the pain,
 The grief, the bitterness of strife,
 The honour without stain.
 Like Winkelried he took
 Into his manly breast
 The sheaf of hostile spears, and broke
 A path for the oppressed.

* * * * *

Alike are life and death,
 When life in death survives,
 And the uninterrupted breath,
 Inspires a thousand lives.

Were a star quenched on high,
 For ages would its light,
 Still travelling downward from the sky,
 Shine on our mortal sight.
 So when a great man dies,
 For years beyond our ken,
 The light he leaves behind him lies
 Upon the paths of men.

A notice of Longfellow, however brief, without some reference to his Translations, would be incomplete. In these he is perfectly at home, reproducing the spirit of the original with singular fidelity. To cite any particular example where he has been most successful, when all are excellent, would be invidious; he has no superior, if indeed he has an equal, at present engaged in the art of translation and adaptation.

If by the above brief—and necessarily imperfect—survey of this American poet's works, the readers of the *Poets' Magazine* who are unfamiliar with his poems which are least known and read, are induced to make their acquaintance, I shall be satisfied. It is refreshing and useful sometimes to pass from our own shores, and study the literature of other countries—though Longfellow can scarcely be classed as a foreign author. In any case, there is so much moral elevation in his poetry, and he sings so nobly of man and his work, that he is worthy of our close fellowship. He is in sympathy with everything that is human, and possesses in a large degree that faith in the Divine which seems to be flickering in many of the finest spirits and intellects of the time. Longfellow's influence will be durable, for his poetry is founded on the belief in the *brotherhood* of man. His genius has anticipated the consummation of the highest hopes of humanity, and in parting from him it is with the desire to witness a speedy fulfilment of his most exalted visions and aspirations.

GEORGE BARNETT SMITH.

ACROSTIC.

(*Dedicated to the Editor of the "Poets' Magazine."*)

P earl of the soul! whose beauteous ray
 O n earth doth Heaven's pure light display,
 E ternal fountain of delight!
 S weet blossom, ever fair and bright,
 Y ea! Poesy, we bow to thee! S. A. STOWE.

A TRUE TALE OF THE SEA.

I'M sitting alone by the moaning sea,
Thinking of those who have flown far from me
The swallow is flying across thy foam,
To a tiny nest which she calls her home,
And the flowers are springing in ev'ry glen,
All but my own are returning again.

The fair moon flings o'er thee at lonely night
A beautiful track of soft silver light;
I thought when a child 'twas the heavenly way
The angels went home at the close of day,
And I longed with swift and with eager feet
To run up that path to the "Shining Street."

I dreamt a sad dream in those days of youth,
Which I heeded not as "too strange for truth;"
I thought the jewels I deemed so fair,
E'en the gem that I was so proud to wear,
Had been scattered—*some* in the hungry sea,
One (its glory gone) was brought back to me.

A sailor boy we had who ne'er returned
To arms that longed for him, and hearts that burned;
But while we listened at the lowly door,
He crossed another threshold just before,
And many dear ones more have gone away
To bloom above, in God's undying day.

At last the dearest, whose fond name I bore,
Who gave me his love, and whose ring I wore,
Came sailing across the dark ocean wide,
Where thousands sleep, far from each waiting bride;
Yet still I thought o'er the boisterous foam
My loved one must surely come safely home.

So I watched and waited as love can wait,
For the lost eyes it seeks both long and late,

With a treach'rous quiet within my breast,
Like the calm of the Alpine snows at rest,
Ere the avalanche fall, and bright things lie,
Crushed under the snow, 'neath a cloudless sky.

On the southern coast, mid the laughing spray.
A brave ship went down in the twilight gray ;
True hearts were on board, from a far off land,
Whose spirits all longed for their own loved strand,
But their morning broke on a shore so fair
That they'll call it home tho' we are not there.

But I could not bear that with glad surprise
My husband should waken in yon bright skies,
That heaven be heaven and I not nigh,
Not a foot on the golden stair. Yet why?
Ah! the waters over the dead may roll,
But thy waves and billows o'erflow my soul.

They brought him to me as in death he lay,
Unbruised by the storm of that fearful day ;
Not a wound or hurt on the noble head,
But the eyes were dim, for their light had fled ;
I looked in those windows, but could not see
In the tenantless house, one hope for me.

My jewels bright, in the haven above
Ye are gathered all by the Saviour's love ;
I can spare ye now for the little time
That I tarry here ; soon my mournful rhyme
Will be changed for the celestial thought,
The glorious song the redeemed are taught.

I am wearing a pearl within my breast,
A priceless gem, giving peaceful rest ;
That they will love me more than e'er before,
I shall be so fair when I reach that shore ;
For tho' beauty's here is not mine to share,
I shall shine like them in the sunlight there.

ALICE COKAYNE.

ESAU.

Love him for all he suffered and forgave,
 For all the right he could so hardly waive,
 For all the wrong he bore yet left him brave!

Love him, as true men love a knightly heart,
 That, swayed by racking pangs, by keenest smart,
 Throbs with a greatness which no pain can part.

His younger brother bought his birthright first,
 Then stole the blessing rightly his, and nursed
 In Isaac's heart for him—so doubly cursed.

But like a soul above contemptuous strife,
 Gently he went his saddened way of life,
 With hardships paved and solitude so rife.

And scorned in later, greater years to take
 The bread his fearful brother bade him break,
 The flocks and herds he sent for sorrow's sake.

Blessing the thief who robbed him of his own!
 Loving the liar who no truth had known!
 He soothed a tardy penitence—how prone!

And left a great forgiveness in his stead,
 And bowed with lordly mien his princely head,
 And passed away—the noblest of the dead!

G. H. R. DABBS, M.D.

TO ———

I PRISON you within mine arms—

My beautiful, mine own!—

Thine eyes are surely Cupid's charms,

Whence darts of love are thrown—

I loose my hands and stand awhile

To feast upon your face—

You stretch again your arms, and smile

Me back to their embrace.—

Your heart is throbbing close to mine,

That long hath throbbed alone—

My lips have crept and clung to thine,

My beautiful, mine own!

MARSTON HOWTH.

LOVE AND DEATH.

As through his realm young Love doth glide,
 Death loometh darkly by his side!
 One quiver serves the fateful twain,
 Who mix their shafts of joy and pain.
 That anxious youth with breast a-glow,
 Makes Love acquainted with his woe;
 Responsive to his call, a dart
 Doth wing its flight, and reach the heart
 Of yon fair lady, who, this morn,
 Threw back his loving words in scorn.
 And now—a maiden, pale and faint,
 To gain Love's aid, doth make her plaint;
 The man who holds her heart, is cold,
 And plays affection false, for gold;
 "Love, give me peace!" she oft doth cry,
 But Love, unheeding, passeth by.
 Forlorn she stands, with trembling lips,
 When Death into the quiver dips;
 In pity fits he to his bow,
 A shaft which lays the maiden low.
 "'Tis better thus," she, dying cries,
 "For Death doth give, what Love denies!"

H. ECCLESTON.

A SNATCH OF SONG.

A SNATCH of some old, half-forgotten song,
 Whose magic voice calls back the vanish'd years;
 And through a mist of many gathering tears,
 Dead faces rise; an eager, joyous throng.
 A bitter cry escapes my weary breast,
 A bitter pain is at my throbbing heart;
 But, oh, my soul! it were the better part
 To mourn not: for those dear ones are at rest!

SAM CLARKE.

LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

WHEN the spirit shall pass to the unknown world,
 When the summons of death shall call,
 When the dimness o'erclouding the misty eye
 Hides for ever the loved ones standing by,
 And the bosom shall cease to rise and fall ;
 When the living shall wildly clasp the dying
 With a hold that would snatch from death,
 But feeling the while an invisible Hand
 Surely and awfully casting the brand,
 Stilling the pulse and the slow coming breath ;
 When the whisper goes round the bedside, "He's gone!"
 And the loved one is only clay,
 Is there hope to illumine that last dread scene,
 Hope on which those broken-hearted can lean,
 As they turn from the death chamber away?
 When the soul-stricken mourners have looked their last,
 And the lid is closed on the dead,
 When all that remains is but mouldering dust,
 Responsive no more to friendship or trust,
 Can a ray yet shine on the grief-bowed head?
 Yes ; out of the darkness a whisper shall rise,—
 "The brother departed but soars to the skies ;
 He passes to living and light ;
 Think not on the clay that is laid 'neath the sod,
 Think thou on the soul ascending to God,
 Paradise waiting its glorious flight."

S. E. DISTIN.

CHARADE.

MY first was blown with martial strains,
 And echoed loudly o'er the plains ;
 From second's walls an answer came,
 And roused in man a raging flame
 To fight their foes with shot and steel,
 And gain renown, ardour, zeal,—
 They fought with vigour, won the day,
 And over whole they long held sway.

HARRY CLEERE.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

SOME years ago, in a book of sacred extracts, we remember coming across a beautiful lyric laden with the very spirit of holy rest, the title and refrain being "He giveth His beloved sleep." It was by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and our reading of the piece was the initial draught from a spring that we have visited often since. We were then unaware of the high rank that Mrs. Browning held among the singers who, singing not alone for Art's sake, are the helpers of our race, and it was gratifying to our first fresh sense of satisfaction with her work to learn afterwards the honoured place she occupied in the estimation of those whose judgment we are accustomed to revere. One pen compares her to "burning Sappho" who "loved and sung" in the old Greek days; another in the quest for a niche in which to place her, pays the finest possible homage to her genius when it designates her "Shakspeare's Daughter;" while a gifted trans-atlantic writer after having occasion to quote a couple of lines from that one of her sonnets which was written in honour of her deceased blind tutor, ejaculates, "Here was the daughter that Milton should have had!" Such a concurrence of testimony justifies us in our present attempt to bring Mrs. Browning's not too familiar works once more before those who are interested in the literature of the English language. Our present purpose is not to discuss how far Mrs. Browning is dramatic, lyric, or idyllic, in her writings, but we may in passing say that in our opinion it is her lyrical grace and beauty that will continue chiefly to charm the readers of her poetry. Her husband, apostrophizing her in the two lines—

O lyric love, half angel, and half bird,
And all a wonder and a wild desire!

gives prominence to what is clearly the first and leading idea which a perusal of her works impresses on the mind. But, tempting as such a line of study would be, we prefer leaving this comparative analysis on one side—at this stage at any rate. We cannot altogether avoid it in our progress, and perhaps ere leaving the subject we may in a subsequent paper give some definite consideration to the inquiry indicated.

To sketch Mrs. Browning's history and contemplate her

character would be most interesting. Formally to do this, however, would occupy too much space, and is happily rendered unnecessary, because if we keep strictly to our subject we shall find that the woman is so thoroughly revealed in the writings, that a very complete portraiture of herself is obtained as we unfold piece after piece of her work. Of almost no other writer of eminence is this characteristic so true.

The fact that two such souls as Mr. and Mrs. Browning met and commingled must in itself be looked upon as a wondrous thing in human history. Each of them instinct with thoughts, feelings, and expression capable of moving a world, what a union was here! It is therefore no unsuitable prelude to our after-thoughts if now we bring Mrs. Browning's personality before us, availing of the best possible agency for the purpose, her husband's words. First he watches her—

Reading by the firelight, that great brow,
And the spirit-small hand propping it
Mutely—my heart knows how —
When, if I think but deep enough
You are wont to answer, prompt as rhyme!

And again,

God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her.

* * * * *

This I say of me but think of you, Love!
This to you—yourself my moon of poets—
Ah, but that's the world's side—there's the wonder—
Thus they see you, praise you, think they know you!
There, in turn, I stand with them and praise you.
Out of my own self I dare to phrase it.
But the best is when I glide from out them,
Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,
Come out on the other side—the novel
Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,
Where I hush and bless myself with silence!

* * * * *

We leave these pictures with the reader, and proceed.

Two alternative plans are available in arranging the general result of a study of Mrs. Browning's poems. We might very well go through her books, and give a running commentary as our ability might permit, but the matter is so extensive, and so

weighty in quality, that it would be manifestly foolhardy to attempt this within reasonable limits. Another and preferable course is to select certain themes which are of universal interest because they pertain to the Human, and, eliciting what our poet thinks upon these, we make the subject-matter of her utterances the crucial test of her truth as a seer or world-teacher, and the language and form of these utterances a standard to fix her merit as an artist. We adopt this, then, as the main plan of the present paper, varying it towards the close by a consideration of some special and general characteristics of Mrs. Browning's poetry.

Suppose we begin with the large things of this world, and peep into Mrs. Browning's books to gather her opinions on peoples and communities, or as Byron phrases it, 'Men in nations.' It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader how the subject of national freedom and development was viewed by the poet almost entirely as illustrated by the yearnings and attempts of Italy after liberty, but although the illustration be thus particular, the application is general and world-wide.

"Casa Guidi Windows" was one of her earliest poems, yet to our thinking, it has some things in it which she never improved upon. It is in this piece that she treats at greatest length on the structure of nations, the leaders peoples require, the hinderers to liberty, the time to act, disappointments, perseverance, success. We feel at great temptation to sketch the plan of the poem, the sequence of ideas and action is so natural, and the temporary failure of the Tuscans in 1848 lends itself so dramatically for treatment. Not that Mrs. Browning looked upon the Tuscan disappointment as an episode that merely gave her as an artist an opportunity for vivid colouring and effective treatment. She felt in her innermost soul and as a very daughter of Italy, that a chance for freedom had been placed within the grasp of hands shackled enough to require it, but guided by spirits too ignoble or unripe to seize and avail of the opportunity.

Recalling the names which rendered the history of Italy glorious—Virgil, Cicero, Cæsar, Dante, Angelo, Raphael, and :—

All whose strong hearts beat thro' stone,
Or broke up heaven for music.

the poet with all her fondness for the land found it hard to count modern Italians—

Those olive-eaters with large, live, mobile mouths
 Agape for macaroni, in the amount
 Of consecrated heroes of her South's
 Bright rosary.

It will be seen that there is here a slight touch of satire, a quality which is not frequently met in Mrs. Browning. But wait! her satire wakens into impatience, then rouses into righteous indignation that men, ox-like, plod onwards, decline their birthright, and refuse to walk erect as thinking self-ruled people. Apathy and inertia prevailed, for although the war-weapons were in their hands, the fact was only a semblance of action :—

Ye bring swords, my Tuscans! Why, if wanted
 In this haze bring swords, but first bring souls!
 Bring thoughts and words unruined by a tear of yesterday's.

Looking round in vain to find a leader, and oppressed with the thought of a nation trifling with its noble capabilities and opportunities, the spectator from the Windows passionately exclaims :—

May we no wise dare
 To point a finger out, and touch a man
 And cry "This is the Leader!" What! all these
 Broad heads, black eyes—yet not a soul that ran
 From God down with a message? All, to please
 The Donna waving measures with her fan,
 And not the Judgment Angel on his knees—
 The trumpet just an inch off from his lips—
 Who when he breathes next, will put out the sun!

Yet she never doubts the ultimate success of right against might, and in spite of all unreadiness and ignorance she retains her faith in the destiny of nations, for the instincts of peoples are true :—

The people, who are simple, blind, and rough,
 Know their own angels after looking round.
 * * * * *

Men upon the whole
 Are what they can be—nations what they *would*,
 Will therefore to be strong, thou Italy!

Again listen to her convictions on this subject, expressed in these powerful and awfully graphic words :—

Ye stamp no nation out, though day and night
 Ye tread them with that absolute heel which grates
 And grinds them!

You kill worms sooner with a garden spade
Than you kill peoples! peoples will not die:

* * * *

'Tis hard to shrivel back a day of God's
Once fixed for judgment! 'Tis as hard to change
The people's when they rise beneath their loads
And heave them from their backs.

Thus far her general conviction. Her confidence as to the particular case of Italy is not less positive. She calls it the—

Great cause of southern men who strive
In God's name for man's rights, and shall not fail!
Behold! they shall not fail!

This language was almost prophetic, and she lived long enough to see the foundations of Italian liberty laid and perceptible progress made with the superstructure.

So much then for her view of peoples. It need not be wondered at that such a poem as "Casa Guidi Windows," dealing as it did with young Italy's efforts after political and national life, must take account of Pope, Priests, and Papacy. Pius IX—our present representative of St. Peter—began to reign very fairly and with good promise of liberal-mindedness. Mrs. Browning writes years afterwards that she was woman enough to believe the professions then made. But so seeming good was Pio Nino that she declares with a grim humour:—

Why almost, thro' this Pius, we believed
The priesthood could be an honest thing—
He smiled so saintly while our corn
Was being sheaved for his own granaries!

Yet though Pope and Priest be naturally ever so warm-hearted and desirous to be liberal to others, reflection teaches that the nature of their office represses "their noble rage" and chills "the genial current of their souls." It is necessary for the Pope to—

Submit to see the people swallow hot
Husk porridge which his chartered churchmen stir,
Quoting the only true God's epigraph,—
"Feed my lambs, Peter!"

The system is one which throughout its history has demanded the surrender of liberties, and to expect a Pope to assist national freedom is to look for figs from thistles.

Closing "Casa Guidi Windows," weary of looking only at sights

that sadden, she shuts out material sunshine. "Souls have inner lights," and, strong in the ultimate assurance that forces were then at work which should bring the liberty she longed for to all oppressed peoples, she takes her "own young Florentine," not two years old, and setting him out where the sunlight falls on his golden hair, she apostrophizes him as God's messenger, lately arrived with tidings that there is no cause for despondency as regards the future.

From peoples distinctively, to society or men in the aggregate is a natural transition. Naturally, too, the poet fixes upon our own land as the locality affording the subjects of her comments. The "haste to be rich" she condemns emphatically, as might be assumed:—

O earth! so full of dreary noises!
 O men! with wailing in your voices;
 O delved gold! the wailer's heap,
 O strife! O curse! that o'er it fall,
 God strikes a silence through you all
 And giveth His beloved sleep!

And again in these words, tipped with satire and hot with conviction:—

The plague of gold strikes far and near,
 And deep and strong it enters!
 * * * * *
 We cheer the pale gold-diggers,
 Each soul is worth so much on 'change,
 And marked, like sheep, with figures;—
 Be pitiful, O God!

But when this mercenary spirit, contemptible enough *per se*, leads to oppression of class by class, to neglect of charity and common consideration, the poet becomes bitter. Though advance has been made since her day, there is still truth in her words:—

The rich preach 'rights' and 'future days,'
 And hear no angel scoffing;
 The poor die mute, with starving gaze
 On corn ships in the offing!
 Be pitiful, O God!

Yet still further, when this wealth-amassing spirit so possesses a nation that the sacredness of childhood is not respected, but little hands and tiny feet, weary childish brows and aching infantile limbs are pressed to labour, then our poet, woman-like,

cannot more be angry. Protests are over—she can now only sorrowfully weep! No apology is made for quoting freely from the “Cry of the Children,” it is so touchingly beautiful:—

Do you hear the children weeping, O! my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
And *that* cannot stop their tears!

* * * * *

Tending the “wheels of iron” in factories, the cry of many children still is—

* * * * * We are weary!
And we cannot run or leap;
If we cared for any meadows it were merely
To drop down in them and sleep!

Being “weary before they run,” knowing man’s grief without its wisdom, his despair without its calm, no wonder Mrs. Browning’s heart bleeds as she closes—

Orphans of the earthly love and heavenly,
Let them weep! let them weep!
* * * * *
They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see!
For they remind you of their angels in high places,
With eyes turned on Deity.
How long! they say; how long! O cruel nation,
Will you stand to move the world on a child’s heart,
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, O gold heaper,
And your purple shows your path;
But the child’s sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath!

However, supposing society to be relieved of the criminality connected with such oppression in pursuit of commercial success, and taking the matter-of-fact utilitarian view, Mrs. Browning quietly smiles at the gorgeous impressions its upholders take of the progress of the age. She fears it often misses the deeper purpose which should underlie all:—

The age culls simples
With a broad clown’s back turned broadly to the glory of the stars.
We are gods, by our own reckoning, and may well shut up the temples,
And wield on amid the incense-steams the thunder of our cars.
For we throw out acclamations of self-thanking, self-admiring,
With, at every mile run faster, “O! the wondrous, wondrous age,”
Little thinking if we work our souls as nobly as our iron,
Or if angels will commend us at the goal of pilgrimage!

From dealing with peoples and with the advance or stagnation which attends them, it would be legitimate to proceed now to consider what our poet's views of men as individuals are, what things hinder or impel their development. But first, as if in parenthesis between the two sections, let us exhibit her idea of how universal progress is achieved, whether sought by communities or by individuals. No matter whether it is a thousand or a unit which yearns for advancement, this is mostly the result of slow and patient working, hoping and plodding, believing and being in earnest :—

Step by step was won,
As each man gained on each securely ! how
Each by his own strength sought his own Ideal,
The ultimate Perfection beaming bright
From out the stars, to bless the leal
And earnest search of all for Fair and Right,
Through the dim forms by earth accounted real.

The wondrous influence of glorious memories in making the dead Past the handmaid of the active Present and a developer of communal and individual progress in the future, is touchingly told in these beautiful lines :—

Let the living live !—
The dead retain flowers on cold graves,
* * * * *
“ Cold graves,” we say. It shall be testified
That living men who throb in heart and brain
Without the dead were colder ! * * *
Scant the gardens if the graves were fewer !
* * * * *

Why, who would fight
For Athens and not swear by Marathon ?
Who would build temples without tombs in sight ?
Who live, without some dead man's benison ?

Having now finished our parenthesis on progress, let us look at the manner in which the poet treats of individual existences. A piece entitled “ A Rhapsody of Life's Progress ” sketches the stages of growth from childhood upwards. Its plan is similar to that of the well-known delineation by Shakspeare, with the difference that in Mrs. Browning the stages are neither numbered nor distinctively separated, although they are more elaborated.

Some of us with powerful memories can still recall impressions of boyhood, and one of them will be,—how large everything ap-

peared to our not long opened eyes, how interminable the years were, and what little sense of proportion we had then. Mrs. Browning gives voice to the feeling thus :—

Lilies look large as the trees,
And loud as the birds sing the bloom-loving bees;
And the birds sing like angels so mystical-fine,
And the cedars are brushing the archangels' feet!

* * * * *

Advancing a degree, we come to this powerful description of the young man glorying in his strength :—

Shouting so aloud, We exult, we rejoice,
That we lose the low moan of our brothers around,
And we shout so a-deep down creation's profound,
We are deaf to God's voice !

* * * * *

When, however, the mere novelty and joy of existence abate a little, purpose and ambition usurp sway. The desire for action that will show result creeps upon the young man : he will plough the deep, build great cities, he will rule, thus :—

Let us sit on the thrones,
In a purple sublimity,
And grind down men's bones
To a pale unanimity.

But through all the bustle there is a voice that is never wholly silenced. The man is forced to think, and the resultant is a true earnestness. As yet, however, he is only the subject of a process, not himself the actor :—

Through the dim rolling we hear the sweet calling
Of spirits that speak in a soft under-tongue,
The sense of the mystical march !
And we cry to them softly, 'Come nearer ! come nearer !'
'And lift up the lap of this dark and speak clearer,'
'And teach us the song that ye sung !'

Conviction of the truth of what the voices say takes possession of the soul, and self-surrender to this truth brings the idea of a duty to others, and so—

With reachings of thought we reach down to the deeps
Of the souls of our brothers.

Everyone knows somewhat of the feeling of awe which comes after reflection on the mystery of human life and its destiny in the universe. What is life ? Whither are we as sentient beings tend-

ing? "Wherefore were we born, for earnest or for jest?" are questions that flash sometimes into our souls, even when to all intents we are at our ordinary avocations. Poets and philosophers since earth was young have sought to solve these problems, but none approach the subject more reverently than Mrs. Browning, or to our thinking give so perfect expression to what the attitude of a mortal should be in respect to these solemnities. The unconscious leaning to spiritual matters alluded to already is again touched on. Though we may be immersed in our secularities—

With our senses folded thick and dark
About the stifled soul within,
We guess diviner things beyond,
And yearn to them!

Perplexed and uninformed *we* may be, and have no more than a yearning, but God's purposes are developing the while around and overhead. These are grand words:—

Freshening upward to His feet
In gradual growth, His full-leaved Will
Expands from world to world!

What a conception to be dwelt upon is in these lines, full of tremulous solemn beauty:—

God keeps His holy mysteries
Just on the outside of man's dream.
In diapason slow we think
To hear their pinions rise and sink,
While they float pure beneath His eyes,
Like swans adown a stream!

And how true it is that, pressed hard by the inscrutable in our own nature, we rush back to palpable things seeking relief from the strain:—

We wrap round us for defence,
Our purple manners, moods of sense,
As angels from the face of God
Stand hidden with their wings.

This groping after God's mysteries, however, recurs and recurs till in the very stretching of the hands to touch them, in our agony we—

Widen so the broad life wound,
Soon large enough for death.

This is dissolution; thus we pass from the mortal to the immortal.

Another touchstone which we will apply to Mrs. Browning's genius is to be found in the question—What is the niche she assigns to the little ones? There have been many good and worthy souls, men and women, who have done gallantly in serving their generation, but who never could unbend sufficiently to understand what a child's nature was. Not so Mrs. Browning. We look with eager interest to find what such a responsive throbbing heart has got to say on the suggestive theme, Childhood. The reverence with which she regards a little child is touching and profound. The helplessness, the artless trust of a babe, the newness of its advent upon earth, the knowledge of how much bitter-sweet lies before the budding being, all serve to throw a halo of sacredness round this period in her eyes. Already we have seen how passionately she pled in the "Cry of the Children:"—

The child's sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath.

In the following lines of apostrophe to her own boy, previously alluded to, a beautiful idea is conveyed of a child's arrival on our sphere. "Teach me," the mother says,—

To hope for what the angels know,
When they smile clear as thou dost; down God's ways,
With just alighted feet, *between the snow*
And snowdrops, where a little lamb may graze.
Thou hast no fear, my lamb, about the road,
Albeit in our vain glory we assume
That, less than we have, thou hast learnt of God!

That quotation and those to follow will perhaps impress the reader as it has impressed the writer with the idea that the poet but follows the footsteps of Him who was the exceptional Child, and who bound the thoughts, "Little Children," and "Heaven" indissolubly together by his own blessed utterances. Mrs. Browning compares the smile on a sleeping infant's face to angels' silent workmanship fining and idealising the clay to fit it for higher spheres:—

Now he hears the angels' voices
Folding silence in the room.

The father and mother looking on, essay to bless their darling, but dare not, feeling that he is holier than they at that moment, through communion with his celestial visitants. He is consecrated,—

Lifted up and separated,
On the hand of God he lies, in a sweetness beyond touching.

Too weak, they dare not give him *their* benediction, but, themselves blessed with *his* peace, they go in peace.

Ere leaving this mode of treating our subject, let us look at one more of these illustrations of Mrs. Browning's power to deal with themes of universal interest. This time the subject shall be the highest of all. It is Christ Himself and in His most glorious character, that of mediator between God and man. Burning at the horrid assumptions of the Romish priesthood, she, jealous for the Redeemer's sole glory, exclaims :—

Priests ! priests ! there's no such name, God's own except
Ye take most vainly. Through heaven's lifted gate
The priestly ephod in sole glory swept
When Christ ascended, entered in and sate
(With victor face sublimely overwept)
At Deity's right hand, to mediate,
He alone ! He for ever !

And in another place the attitude of the Intercessor is affectingly alluded to :—

Nay, Lord ! be gentler to our foolishness,
For His sake who assumed our dust, and turns
On Thee pathetic eyes,
Still moistened with our tears !

* * * * *

We will now vary our method, and in place of as hitherto seeking special subjects and listening to what this great teacher has to say to us upon them, let us glance over her works and from some qualities that we see endeavour to form an estimate of Mrs. Browning's muse.

One of the first tests we are accustomed to apply to any who would be ranked among poets is, Has he or she conception or fancy ? In this Mrs. Browning is particularly great. Some of the pieces already quoted will serve as evidences of this ; notably the idea of restrained power in the figure of the judgment angel, whose breath upon the trumpet will put out the sun ! in the majesty of the description of the Saviour ; in the treatment, under the form of hovering impersonations, of the mysteries of God ; in the voice she gives to the suffering children ; and in other lines easily recalled. This point is, however, so important that we must

dwell a little more upon it. In the piece entitled "A Drama of Exile," there are many lofty conceptions. The dialogues between Adam, Eve, and Lucifer bristle with evidence of this power. We cannot quote all we are tempted to quote, but one passage may be taken for many. As Lucifer of—

Vast brows and melancholy eyes
Which comprehend the heights of some great fall,

stands in controversy with Adam and Eve after their sin, a low music sounds which awakens memories in His breast stunning and silencing him. What is it that overcomes this Mighty One that, sighing, he sinks away into invisibility and solitude? By a fine fancy this soft music which comes streaming down from the spheres is made to take articulate form. A pathetic interest is thrown over the fallen Prince when this subdued distant moan is recognised as the Wail of the Morning Star over the loss of her companion:—

Thine Angel glory sinks
Down from me, down from me—
My beauty falls, methinks
Down from thee, down from thee!
O my light bearer,
O my path preparer,
Gone from me, gone from me!
Ah, ah, Heosphoros!
I cannot kindle underneath the brow
Of this new Angel here, who is not Thou.
All things are altered since that time ago,—
And if I shine at eve, I shall not know.
I am strange—I am slow.
Ah, ah, Heosphoros!
Henceforward, human eyes of lovers be
The only sweetest sight that I shall see,
With tears between the looks raised up to me,
Ah! ah!
When, having wept all night, at break of day
Above the folded hills they shall survey
My light, a little trembling, in the grey.
Ah! ah!
And gazing on me, such shall comprehend,
Through all my piteous pomp at morn or even
And melancholy leaning out of heaven,
That love, their own divine, may change or end,
That love may close in loss!
Ah, ah! Heosphoros!

But there are lighter fancies than these great overpowering

conceptions. For instance the fresh young river ministers to old ocean :—

Harken! harken!
The rapid river carrieth
Many noises underneath
The hoary ocean,
Teaching his solemnity
Sounds of inland life and glee,
Learnt beside the waving tree.

The poet elaborates this idea of the sea getting to know what passes among men by means of the human sound thus transmitted. Children's shouts, widows' moans, foemen's curses, pledging of lovers, vowing of monarchs—in fact the whole series of human utterances are referred to. Joining the two kinds of sounds :—

The regular breath of the calm creation,
The moan of the creature's desolation,"

the poet wonders that men who ponder with interest human cries, and who love the sounds of nature, will decline in so many instances to hear the voice of God in their souls :—

Harken! harken!
Shall we hear the lapsing river,
And our brother's sighing ever,
And not the voice of God!

In the "Romance of the Ganges" there are many fine points. It is based on a custom of the Indian maidens to place a little lamp and a flower on a tiny shell-boat and watch it float down the stream. If the boat carries the lamp till it is out of sight, with the flame unquenched :—

The maiden is sure that love will endure,
But love will fade with light.
The river floweth on.

The girl gazes so keenly that the—

Look in her dilating eyes
Might seem to *drive her boat!*
The river floweth on.

A rebuke is administered to the tendency in human nature, to revert to low symbols for the soul. The maiden adopts a lamp, yet not only lamps would be glad, but—

All the stars are ready
To symbolize the soul—
The stars untroubled by the wind
Unwearied as they roll!

The recurrence of the refrain "the river floweth on," suggests Tennyson's "Brook," and both speak to us of a something that is unvarying and unchanging in its steadiness. Is there here a recognition of a great upbearing Will beneath all the vanishing love-lamps and disappearing boats of human purpose and feeling? It may well be so.

Mrs. Browning's command of happy phrases and delicate imagery is very marked. A few examples of these will suffice. A maiden's speaking is said to be interwound—

Of the dim and the sweet, 'tis a *twilight of sound*,
And floats through the chamber.

The large musing eyes, neither joyous nor sorry,
Sing on like the angels in separate glory,
Between clouds of amber!

The well-known principle of vibration in the air is laid under contribution beautifully, when the poet speaks of life answering life across the vast profound—

I think this sudden joyaunce which illumines
A child's mouth sleeping, unaware may run
From some soul newly loosened from earth's tombs!
I think this passionate sigh, which, half begun
I stifle back, may reach and stir the plumes
Of God's calm angel standing in the sun!

Elsewhere she writes:—

O soft and far as silver star did touch with star;

And again how expressive is the line:—

God sees me! God, who took my heart and drowned it in life's surge!

She talks of—

All the dreams of dreamers young
Before their heads have time for slipping off
Hope's pillow to the ground!

And there is something striking and startling in the wish that all may—

Wear, in the visible overflows
Of spirit, such a look of careful pain!
Methinks God loves it better than repose!

Picturesque and descriptive of nature's appearances her muse was in no small degree, but space forbids quotation at length. Just two extracts:—

O waterfalls and forests! sound and silence! mountains bare
That leap up peak by peak, and catch the palls
Of purple and silver mist!

What a day it was that day !
 Hills and vales did openly
 Seem to heave and throb away
 At the sight of the great sky !
 And the silence, as it stood
 In the glory's golden flood
 Audibly did bud, and bud !

* * * * *

When we remember how much pain Mrs. Browning suffered all through life, we do not look for her poetry to exhibit humour. She was too awfully in earnest to have much time for play. There is no doubt a touch of humour in the quaint little serio-comic lyric called the "Romance of the Swan's Nest," but there is so little of this quality throughout her works that practically it may be said she has none. She has satire, however, awakened by her earnest impatience at seeing dread realities neglected for trifles. This satire or irony is so palpably true to nature and graphic in its delineation that sometimes one cannot help laughing heartily, despite the feeling that tragedy underlies the words. We will quote only a single instance. Grand Duke Leopold had fled. The Tuscans breathing out enthusiasm at every pore, cried "Long live the people!" Ah surely liberty is here at last! The joy guns thunder, the bells ring. The young bluster, and the old do not recoil. The Duke's arms are everywhere pulled down—new *café* signs are set up—

To show
 Where patriots might sip ices in pure air—
 * * * * * To and fro
 How marched the civic guard, and stopped to stare
 When boys broke windows in a civic glow!
 How rebel songs were sung to loyal tunes,
 And bishops cursed in ecclesiastic metres.
 * * * * *

We chalked the walls with bloody caveats
 Against all tyrants. If we did not fight
 Exactly, we fired muskets up the void
 To shew that victory was ours of right!
 * * * * *

The pathos which her pages breathe is almost without parallel anywhere. Our quotations show how deep were the chords which Mrs. Browning struck. Standing beside the dead lips that said

last night to us "Be stronger-hearted!" we feel the real farness through the seeming nearness :—

O God—to clasp these fingers close
And yet to feel so lonely!
To see a *light upon such brows,*
Which is the daylight only!
Be pitiful, O God!

Here we must lay down our pen for the present. Our survey of a wide field has necessarily been rapid and partial, but we would hope not wanting in definite appreciation as far as it has gone. In our next article we purpose glancing at Mrs. Browning's Love Poetry, and in particular her "Sonnets from the Portuguese."

DUNCAN MCCOLL.

(*To be Continued.*)

STREWN ASHES.

BY ALFRED HARBLON.

THE INVOCATION.

IN the back-blown breeze and murmuring mist,
In the evening light of the clamorous day,
When the night kneels down to the day's last tryst,
Falters and falls on the turf and clay,
My heart grows grey on the broken way,
And I bow myself as a votarist.

O Love, my Love, in the mist and rain,
In the coil and recoil of the foam and sea,
Your face has fled, and your wan eyes wane,
And my heart is high where no hope can be
For now, as the shade of a forest tree,
You wave and perish with winds again.

Or whether you live, or whether you see
How that I love you, I wot not now;
We could then have fared, had we then been free,
But now, without stooping to press your brow,
Now, without word, or caress, or vow,
I could bind my flesh unto thine and thee.

In the cold deep grave, in the darkened light,
I could brush the dew from your lips and face,
I could fire your blood till your eyes grew bright,
I could fill you with life from a keen embrace,
Till your face grew golden with warmth and grace,
Till you plucked the glory from day and night.

O Love, my Love! I have lost all hope,
I have lost your life, I have lost the light,
That shone for me, ere your horoscope
Wafted a mist on the moonshed night,
When you turned to me with a soul wan-white,
Turned to me as the heliotrope.

Turned to me with your wistful eyes,
Turned to me and your soul to mine,
And spake such words as a sacrifice,
As the light that is buried beneath the wine,
As the golden rays that repeat and shine
Far away where no sound can rise.

Said such words as a pure soul would:
May God be gracious! they were to me
Fair as angels unsullied food,
As fair as the jewels beneath the sea:
Oh Love, my Love! I would give to thee
My soul in sorrow to gather its good.

You might here and there from the foam and blood,
Gather some ray that had seen the sun,
Some soft grieving and grief that stood,
Half buried and broken, as rills that run
Beneath deep shadows and shrubs, that shun
Mire, miasm, and poisonous food.

Here in the hour that you bowed your head,
Night to life, and the day to death,
Oh Love, my Love, had you cherished
The life that lives in my love and breath,
You lief had lived though death gainsayeth,
All the life that from me had fled.

Is there a God or a Heaven above,
Supreme and silent, upborn by stars?
Are you with him, O my Love, my Love?
Are you barred from me, without walls or bars?
Are you robed from me in the soft simars,
Hidden from me without night or grove?

Can you turn from me? Can you grieve and weep
That I am as I am? Can you wish me dead,
That my soul in its sorrow might spring and leap,
To kiss your hair and your mournful head?
Or in the fields where the rains have fled,
Do you rest in silence and wake or sleep?

Oh Love, my Love! when you bade me flee
From all sweet things, when you bade me think
The whole world God's, and the sovereign sea
His alone, and the palor and pink
Of the clouds was his, I could scarcely shrink
From believing in all things bethought of thee.

When I watched you dead, when the sunset fell
On your sweet, sad face, O my life, my love!
I bowed to the gods, as the gods may tell,
In my madness I called on the gods above,
Called to the gods that the gods might prove,
Death or life or a last farewell.

I sometimes dream in the later eve,
That I see you pass in the grove of trees,
I watch the waves, and I then believe
That you wander and linger upon the breeze;
I can find your face in the deepest seas,
I think you present and wake and grieve.

Grieve—for I think that had you been mine,
You had known me then as I may not be;
You had found some gold with the sheen and shine,
Some truth and honour within the sea,
I had lived for you, you had found in me
Hope and love that cannot be mine.

Have you thought of me in your robes of gold,
In your purple bands and glittering crown?
Will you bend this spring as the flowers unfold,
Will you hover from heaven, and bending down
From sky and stars where the grey winds frown,
Kiss my mouth as you did of old?

The trysting place in the weeping wood
Is brown with leaves from the drooping boughs,
The little rivulet where you stood,
And heard the passion of words and vows,
Is dark and rushing, the winds arouse
Murmuring moans where the waters brood.

Oh Love, my Love! do you fare afar,
Wander and wave in the winds and sea?
On the eve you died did a silver star
Mount there to the skies where her brethren be?
My love, no star is more pure to me,
Nor saints in heaven more saintly are.

Could you live again, could you hold my hand,
I would fly with thee where thy soul has fled:
I could rise and rove from the sweeping sand,
Stand with thee ere my life was dead;
These things might be, but for all things said,
My life, my life, you have left our land!

O Love, my Love! can you hear me call,
Whether in heaven, or earth, or sea,
Swathed in turf, or in grave, or pall,
Can you hear me call and not cry to me?
Wake and whisper if voice be free,
Lowly and lightly as blossoms fall.

I shall hear you murmur in breeze and rain,
I shall see your face in the birth of night.
Weary with watching and love and pain,
I shall cling to you, live with you out of sight,
Live till the morrow is waking white,
And wait and pray for the night again.

(To be Continued.)

SONG.

Good morn my love! night's sombre shadows
 Unfold from Nature's radiant face—
 The leafy dells, the slopes, the meadows
 Are full of beauty, light and grace.
 The gorgeous sun, with glory steeping
 The glowing clouds, the golden corn—
 Sweet buds from perfume beds are peeping—
 Good morn, my love, good morn!

Good morn, my love—soft zephyrs sighing,
 Woo tenderly each trembling leaf—
 The glit'ring moths around us flying,
 Awake to life and love so brief—
 The sun-kist streams are brightly gleaming
 By mossy bank and verdant lawn,
 Like happy souls of heaven dreaming—
 Good morn, my love, good morn!

Good morn, my love! the lark's glad greeting,
 The cheerful hum of busy bees—
 Faint echo each refrain repeating,
 Like sounds of bells upon the breeze.
 Fond Nature smiles brimful of blisses,
 In robes of splendour newly worn;
 Our Eden, dearest, surely this is—
 Good morn, my love, good morn! JOHN ORTON.

SLEEP.

O SLEEP, beloved sleep!
 I hear thee coming through the stilly air,
 I feel thy presence by the calm and deep
 Dream-music everywhere.

How beautiful thou art!
 Thy face is partly veil'd with silvery mist,
 Through which the star-beams glance;—and part
 Is by dark night-clouds kiss'd!
 VOL. II.

How richly garbed art thou!

Thy robe is woven with the pale moonbeams,
And rays of star-light; while upon thy brow,
The lonely crescent gleams.

Thy mantle droopeth low,
Sweeping the fringes of thy purple train,
Whereon, mild tints of sundown faintly glow,
And fade away again!

Thy fingers grasp the flowers
That bloom on Lethe plains, where thou dost keep
The grape and poppy, garnered in dim bowers,
O best beloved sleep!

Thy swift feet ever tread
The mazy regions of mysterious night;
And there, the future to the past is wed,
In our bewildered sight.

O thou that from above,
Bringest the charms that can assuage all fear,
Bringest the wished-for, the long-cherished love;
To me thou art most dear!

To me, thou art the fleet
Forerunner of the one, whose subtle dart
In striking surely, will but bring the sweet
Balm for my weary heart!

O Sleep, thou art the pale
Sister of Evening, and Day's youngest-born,
Wedded to Midnight—mother of the frail
And laughter-loving Morn!

Thou art the faithful friend,
In whose fantastic mansions, pain and care,
And bitter life-woes vanish—troubles end
In dreams and visions fair!

O Sleep, O holy Sleep!
Steal softly onward through the realms of night,
And guide me gently, in oblivion deep,
To never-dying light!

MARIE TREVELYAN.

SONNET—EDINBURGH BY MOONLIGHT.

HIGH-seated Capital that rear'st sublime
Thy castle-craggs to fill the starry sky
With grandeur and ethereal majesty,
And be a glory thro' all-changing Time,—
How softly doth the mild moon shower her beams
On thy mysterious loveliness to-night!
As thro' the regions of our fairest dreams
She winds her wondrous way, methink she seems
To swell in purer splendour at the sight
That looms below. Throned on majestic hills
With gaze that ever scans the beauteous sea,
And peaceful mountains, where the babbling rills
Mingle their music with eternity—
Like some enduring dream thou standest in the sky!

DAVID R. WILLIAMSON.

ON THE (SO-CALLED) OBSCURITY OF BROWNING.

THERE are to whom the mystic Germans seem
As crystal clear, from inner consciousness
Evolving nought that troubles them to guess
The secret of some transcendental dream,—
Some theory profound poured forth in stream
Of ponderous words, which, in their view, express
Great aim, deep meaning—and who yet profess
To find in our own English Poet theme
Of wondrous difficulty and distress!
Sorely perplexed, to them there comes no gleam
Of helpful light to guide them as they pore
O'er thoughts that to their minds are fathomless.
What marvel they remonstrate, and deplore
A depth affronting their own shallowness?

J. W. DALBY.

NOTHING NEW.

WHATE'ER has happened here below,
Since earth from nothing grew ;
Though many changes we have seen,
Yet still there's "nothing new !"

Above, below, where'er we look,
Whatever meets our view,
Still bears the impress on its brow,
There's nothing here that's new.

The fashions change ! What do we see ?
They're changed, indeed, 'tis true ;
But though they're altered yet we find
The change is "nothing new."

An author suddenly appears :
We read his volumes through ;
Yet still we very often find
He's written "nothing new."

The poet finds it just the same ;
Though "*sweet and touching*" too,
His sonnets are "declined with thanks,"
The "ideas are not new."

Whate'er we see, whate'er we read,
In everything we do,
We prove the truth of what I've said,
That there is "nothing new."

Examples I could multiply,
And so, no doubt, could you,
But still, whatever we might say.
It would be "nothing new."

C. E. M. G.

ONLY.

ONLY a weak, weak woman, love,
And very feeble too,
But she owns a woman's heart, love,
All for you.

Only a little daisy, love,
With petals frail,
Content to bloom, e'en at your feet,
Quiet and pale.

Only with loving sympathy
To cheer thy way,
Only to kneel beside thee, love,
And help thee pray.

Only a little life, love,
Wrapt up in thine,
Only to live eternally,
Thy hand in mine.

P. E. G.

DREAMLAND.

FROM the shadowy haunts of Dreamland stealing,
Comes a pageant of the vanished Past,
For Time hath closed the breach with gifts of healing
And all the ancient glamour round it cast.
The well-known forms come crowding round in numbers,
In ne'er forgotten scenes I live again,
While long-lost voices mingle with my slumbers
And thrill me with a pleasure nigh to pain.

The wreathing clouds of Memory grow clearer,
The tangled web of thought unwinds apace,
An ever-bright'ning halo hovers nearer,
Encircling with its light a well-known face:
Not cold, as last I saw it, gazing blindly,
For through the mist of tears I scarce could see,
But as of old, while smiling all too kindly,
Love's fondest look of love it wore, for me,

Then with sweet echoes still around me ringing,
 I wake; ah! this stern Present is no dream;
 I don its sober garb of thought swift flinging
 To the far distance Mem'ry's sunny gleam,
 That, only in our visions we may cherish,
 When dead alike to present joy or grief -
 The Dreamland Past alone can never perish
 And there we seek, nor vainly, for relief.

MARIE.

A DREAM.

I DREAMED a dark and fearful dream—
 A dream that left the world no longer fair,
 Extinguished Hope's last fitful gleam,
 And turned life's brightest joys to dark despair.

I saw my darling borne along
 In sable pomp to her last sleeping-place;
 I heard the solemn requiem song,
 And saw the tearful gleam in every face.

I felt around my home a pall—
 A cloud of gloom, the atmosphere of Death,
 The sense of something lost on all;
 E'en Nature speaking low, with bated breath.

* * * * *

I woke midst shouts and laughter gay,
 And sounds which suited ill my mournful vein—
 The voices of my children loud in play,
 Recalling me to life and hope again.
 And she—thank God!—My heart's delight!
 Her golden head lay pillowed on my breast.
 My dream was gone,—the dawning light
 Revealed not Death, but Love and peaceful Rest.

F. W. R.

“PLUS BELLE QUE PARIS.”

“THESE, at least, shall never enter Paris,” said a young Frenchman, “looking at the dead bodies of two Prussian soldiers. “My son,” said an old man, with infinite grace and sweetness, “let us hope they have already entered a far more beautiful city, and that you and I shall be there with them.”

Times' Correspondent, Versailles, 1871.

HARK! the bugle sounds a truce,
Where, against the Paris forts
Prussia's battle breaks and breaks.
There France watches while the foe
His slain warriors lays to rest.

Hark! Resentment fiercely speaks—
Ah! Dieu merci; notre Paris,
Malgré tout, la Perle du monde,
Ces deux coquins-là, au moins,
Jamais, jamais, n'entreront.

Hark! Forgiveness makes reply—
Ah, mon fils, ne vois tu pas
Ceux qui entrant une ville plus belle?
Ah! ces vivans et ces morts,
Qu'ils y soient concitoyens!

Is it France who speaks, or He,
Who, when all men were His foes,
To the battle came, our Peace,
Crying from the cross, “Forgive!”
Laying down His life for all?

A. MIDDLEMORE MORGAN.

THE ROLL CALL.

THE sun sank down behind a distant wood,
And cast rich crimson rays atween the trees,
On pallid faces smirched with ruddier blood,
And hair blown lightly by the ev'ning breeze

Some twenty men lay in a grassy dell
Where flowers, down-trodden on that battle day,
Perfumed the wind, drenched with the foetid smell
Of blood, from dead, and those who wounded lay.

Loud moans and cries for water filled the air
As dusky night spread o'er them her dark pall,
But few e'er heard again the trumpets blare
Or answered to the daily muster call;
And glow-worm like o'er the fast dark'ning scene,
The lanterns of the surgeons shone around,
As busy with their probes, and scalpels keen,
They knelt by wounded on the blood-stained ground.

Down in the dell a youth of eighteen years
Lay with the death-dew glist'ning on his face,
His eyes to earth downcast, now filled with tears;
Now, in delirium, flashed forth stern menace.
As thoughts of home, or battle filled his brain,
He "babbled of green fields" or shouted "Charge!"
Or, with a low cry wrung by intense pain
Clutched at the grasses by the dark woods marge.

A livid hue o'erspread his pallid face,
The ashen hue of fast approaching death,
Which, quickly mounting, reached the dark eyes' glaze
As with raised head he gasped forth shiv'ring breath—
A cloud passed from the moon's soft rising light,
A ray slid down and kissed the white young brow
(Fredrich lay wounded on that summer night,
Close by, and heard his last words whispered low),

"How clearly breaks the brilliant crystal dawn!
Hush! God's army's mustering on high!" he said,
"I hear the roll-call cried now!" "*Ernst von Korn!*"
"*Here!*" and with a bright smile sank back dead.

H. B. B.

“ ANGELS UNAWARES.”

OH! how beautiful the legend, that the old-world story bears,
Of the true, the steadfast patriarch, bowed with years and griefs
and cares,
Who, when sheltering unknown strangers, found them “ Angels
unawares.”

Is it not a grand conception, in our life a staff and stay,
That are ever hovering near us, viewless spirits day by day?
In our ears are whispering comfort, charming evil thoughts
away.

Oh! that each storm-beaten bosom with this grand belief was
fraught,
That the sinless virgin-hearted, knew our every act and thought;
And are prompting us to virtue with a love unseen, unbought.

Should we not, when pleasure's luring tempts us from the
narrow way,

Pause amid our backward-sliding, and with furtive glances, say
In remorseful undertones, “ Yes! they see me, I must stay

“ My misdoing!” And each brave one, who at Virtue's
prompting dares

All the scoffing of gay worldlings, finds his heart's young seed-
time bears

Harvest, ripened by the viewless angel guardians unawares.

OMEGA.

BLIND HARPIST.

YE tender thrilling chords,
On whose seraphic wing
A breath of Paradise is borne,
To soothe my murmuring!
Though to a feeble touch,
Stoop from thy silent seat,
And wake enchanting resonance,
Melodious and sweet.
What shall inspire my song?
One faithful friend remains—
Thrice dear, because the only one—
It liveth in thy strains.

The world to me is sound,
 And thou its sweetest voice,
 Amid a thousand comforters,
 The darling of my choice.
 No voice can speak like thine,
 Or minister relief
 To stay the pangs of solitude,
 The bitterness of grief.
 For balm of kindly words,
 With loving arms entwined,
 And warmth of throbbing bosom bared,
 An all in thee I find.
 No wealth of words can tell
 How real thy love appears—
 Thou soulless sympathetic thing—
 'Tis consecrate with tears.

A. E. D.

REVIEWS.

"Poems," by Outis, and "Rhymes in the West of England Dialect," by Agrikler. Houlstons, London; J. Wright & Co., Bristol.—Not often do we meet with such a happy combination of genuine humour and shrewd common sense as we find in the volume before us. The work is divided into two parts, as will be seen by the title, but the two collections of poems are evidently the productions of the same pen. The first poem by "Outis" that strikes us is that entitled "Shelling Green Peas—a Grandmother's Story." It is founded on a well known bit of West of England folk lore, to the effect that when a maiden finds a pod containing nine green peas and fastens it above the door, the first male who enters will be her lover:—

Pop, pop, pop—here I made a sudden stop,
 For I felt a thrill of triumph I had never heard before,
 Look, Cousin Gerty! look! and above my head I shook
 A pod containing nine, and there were neither less nor more.

Then, the pod being fixed above the door, sure enough the right man comes, and the grandmother continues:—

No, he was not fond of smoking—of course he was good-looking—
 I thought he was perfection—I was difficult to please;
 We were scarcely then acquainted, but I thought I should have
 fainted
 When he passed the magic barrier of the nine green peas.

Oh, I felt in such a twitter, all the rest were in a titter;
 Cousin Gerty was quite anxious—I trembled at the knees;
 How inquisitive you are! Yes, it *was* your grandpapa—
 And is it any wonder he's so fond of green peas?

"How I got to St. Ives is written in a rollicking vein, well befitting the narrative of an adventure on the sea. Here is a specimen:—

'Twas in the good ship "Bride," that we sailed upon the tide,
 The sun was shining brightly, nor mal-de-mer we dread,
 For the sea was smooth as glass, as the muddy Pill we pass,
 And leave behind thy villas, O charming Portishead!

And we sang by fits and snatches of Tom Bowling under hatches,
 Of a ship that once did founder in the dread Biscayan bay:
 Of a boat, and eke a ferry, and of quaffing of good sherry
 Of Rule Britannia!—I'm afloat—and sand both white and grey.

The water rippled gently, and in splendour bright did glow
 The yellow blossom'd gorse upon the heights of Westward Ho!
 Two barges, like two bridesmaids, were lying alongside,
 And the ship, *en deshabelle*, was rather dirty for a "Bride."

From Agrikler's "Rhymes in Dialect," we select a few lines to show with what bluntness and worldly wisdom the Somersetshire farmer treats the subject of—

COURTSHIP.

I shud luk vor a maaid wi zome brass, ef the maaiden herself I wer
 pleased at;
 Tha wife es tha principal theng, but the moany mun yent to be
 sneezed at.
 And spooasin et comes ta this here—yo mid think yerself perty and
 clever,
 But the maaid as yo wants to hev you, *wont* hev ye at noo price what-
 ever;
 Mebby she got zome one else, and dooant care to fleng up a trump
 at ye;
 Mebby you beeant no girt ketch—not for a maaiden to jump at ye.
 Waait till the right un turns up, and then you ull vind, thers noo doubt
 ont,
 Ther's quite as good fish in the say as ever were know'd ta come out
 ont.

Very excellent advice is given by Agrikler to those fussy people who trouble themselves much about little things, in the following lines:—

TIAKE ET YAZY.

When thengs goo ta rack and ruin,
 Thaw you'm nither zick ner liazy,
 Ther's a maxim wuth the doin—
 Tiake et yazy.

Thaw you mid be in a hurry,
 Thaw a thousand duties chase ye,
 Nothin's done by fuss and flurry,
 Tiake et yazy.

When the vawks yer got about ye
 Wunt do nothin not to plaze ye,
 Doant let that ther vex nor flout ye,
 Tiake et yazy.

Whatsome'r yo miakes a start in,
 Thaw yer luck at times betray ye,
 Never run to meet misfortin,
 Tiake et yazy.

When you'm strong, if Fortin lift ye,
 She'll play tricks as mid amaze ye;
 When you'm tother side o' fifty,
 Tiake et yazy.

Thengs ull never shrenk by doublin,
 Care from care ull ne'er relase ye;
 Only trouble's got by troublin,—
 Tiake et yazy!

The book is well printed on good paper, and tastefully bound in green and gold. We are told that, although it has been widely read in the West of England, there is still (in Thackeray's words) "one copy left at the publisher's," and we advise the reader to lose no time in securing it.

"England and other Poems," by PERCY RUSSELL.—Wyman, Great Queen Street.—This little book contains about as many lines as one third of our Magazine. We hope that now the *Poets' Magazine* is established, such tiny volumes need not be printed. Mr. Russell possesses a vein of pure poetry, but he often brings the ore to the surface with other than the true metal, for instance in the little poem of two verses on a large subject. The first is:—

LIFE.

This life hath duration little,
 As a pipe of clay 'tis brittle,
 Whence we puff our smoky being
 Lit by some with devil's sparks!
 Tale for memory too vapid.
 Or a rose leaf down a rapid—
 Shooting for an instant's seeing,
 Which no more the gazer marks."

There have been many figures of life forthcoming, and some can be seen in the Scriptures, but we fancy these are among the smallest which have been printed yet. One can hardly think that the same pen painted this sweet picture :—

TO MY WIFE.

My own dear Wife ! There is an eloquence
In those four words beyond the reach of art.
Can smiles from nature e'en impart
A dearer meaning to the quickest sense ?
As leaves the nearest to the rose's heart,
Exhale a perfume that is most intense,
So as each day falls from thy Tree of Life,
It gives to memory yet a sweeter store,
Where all was sweetness exquisite before.
Wise, gentle, constant, tender, changeless wife,
With that true love, whose eyes are never blind,
Accept these pages, all unworthy thee,
For thou hast proved no less in heart than mind
That woman may in wifehood perfect be !

Mr. Russell is too fond of finding fault with our good Queen and with authority in general. We like his music on marriage, but we are sorry to see that the book is printed to praise those who pay for the advertising pages. The poet has fallen far from Parnassus when he links Bon Bons, Cocoa, and Perfumery to his lines. Rise Russell, rise.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"Sonnets," by A. C. D.—Both sonnets commence well and end weakly. Had the last half dozen lines been as well written as the first they would have been very acceptable.

"The King of Finland's Daughter," by J. Y.—A very cleverly-written tragedy. We much regret that on account of length it would be unsuitable to our pages. Speaking of the Christ the author makes one of the heathen priests to say :—

I know but little of him save from lips
Of sailors shipwrecked on our shores, and men
Who've dwelt in foreign lands and knew the faith.
I've heard what set me longing more to know,
The watch-word and the law of his religion,
Is "*Overcome the evil with the good.*"

"Sunset Hours," by A. E.—A prettily conceived poem, and containing some very fine lines, yet lacking finish. Here is one of the last verses :—

But shineth purely through her soul-lit eyes ;
Dreamily, stilly, float her calm replies,
As the mute questions in his gaze arise.

"Forgive and Forget," by W. H. R.—Your poetry is marred by the insertion of common-place words; for instance, you say that words oft wake the chords of our hearts with *sturdy raps*. "The Ocean" is such a used-up subject, so suggestive of Byron. We trust you will *forgive* our fault-finding and not *forget* us.

"Poor Man's Funeral," by A. E. D.—Devoid of interest and not running smoothly. "Blind Harpist" accepted with thanks.

"Otterburn," by W. E. J.—This sonnet is rather hazy. If the author would express his ideas in clear language, and also write distinctly, his contributions would be acceptable.

J. M. G. A. (Peckham).—The prizes will be awarded as soon as possible after we learn the verdict. "The Poet's Death" is among our accepted matter. Had you sent stamps we would have replied by post.

Miss R. (Southport).—The article mentioned would be suitable if not too long—and might be forwarded on approval.

"Shakespeare" and "In the Gloaming," by M. T.—The first is an ambitious subject, and would require a master mind such as our Laureate's, to do it justice. "Gloaming" is a pretty little poem enough, but we object to the principle—the young lady asking for the hand and heart of her beloved, instead of the *vice versa* proceeding as usual. We have not a particle of sympathy with the Woman's Rights movement, and is not this a step in that direction. Send us other contributions by all means.

"Ode to Hope," by R. H.—A very meritorious production; but we fear our readers would pass it by on account of the theme. In our hearts we cannot have too much of hope, but in poetry a little goes a long way.

"Shadows of the Past, &c.," by E. T. K. (Coleraine).—Good, yet not strikingly original. Both pieces would have been improved by condensation both of thought and language. For answer to query see that to "J. M. G. A." Also our Notice.

F. W. D. (Harrow).—Pretty conceits, but not well carried out. Hurriedly composed we should think. The opening lines to the longer effusion are good:—

There is no wind that woos the flow'r,
But steals its fragrance sweet."

It is appalling to think how many fair and sweet flowers in life's garden are "wasting their fragrance on the desert air."

"The Attic Philosopher."—Who the Attic Philosopher is we do not know, but his lines show him to be a deep thinking philosopher. We cannot, however, consent to throw overboard the established rules of rhythm from our now swiftly sailing vessel.

"Look up," &c., by Ella.—Good, had the rhymes been perfect—lesson and season, &c. "The Twilight" accepted with omission mentioned.

A. E. D. S.—You do not pay enough attention to the fall of your accents, Counting the syllables is not sufficient if the lines do not read smoothly.

S. H. (Sherborne).—Hardly in our line. Further we confess to being idiotic enough not to understand the poems. They were submitted to some friends for enlightenment, who only shook their heads and sighed. So with much reluctance we gave it up.

"Rosa Lee," &c., by E. B.—What a pity you have left brow and now to rhyme with no. We must decline a very sweet little song solely on this account. The same fault is discernible in all contributions forwarded.

"Until the Day Break," &c., by J. B.—Thanks. The above shall appear as early as possible.

"Cleopatra," by G. B. (India).—Thanks for your offer. The lines hardly rise to the grandeur of the subject. You have, however, undoubted poetical talent, and we greet you as a brother bard though "Oceans roll between."

W. O. X. (Perth).—Not quite up to mark. "Before his rays *he did* withdraw," is not poetry. Send again.

G. A. (Gainsboro').—We do not consider any of the last batch of poems so good as the one we inserted. Please write on one side of paper only.

"An Angel's Kiss," by H. K.—A happy idea, though not as clearly worked out as it might be. We extract the first and last verses:—

One night, while lying on my bed,
I dreamt a dream of bliss:
Methought an angel bent his head,
My wearied brow to kiss.

In this world's toils I take my part,
They're now to me but bliss,
For still I feel, on brow and heart,
God's holy angel's kiss.

ELLEN CLARE.—Thanks for another budget. We have spent some time trying to correct the measure, but have not succeeded satisfactorily. Were you to expend the same time and thought over one poem that you have hitherto given to half-a-dozen, you would probably succeed.

"The Monk's Soliloquy," by C. A. S.—A very clever and, so to speak, eccentric effusion. There are too many parenthesis however. Most of our Readers (we trust all who have arrived at maturity) have exclaimed inwardly with the awakening monk—

This Love—what is't? I ask myself alone.
It seems a mighty power to mighty souls!

"Love or Death, by L. K.—A rapidly told tragedy; too rapidly to be realizable. It is seldom we have to complain that an author has condensed a story, and the fault is usually a proof of some power.

ARTHURESTINE.—This lady (who by the way has chosen a very pretty *nom de plume*) has sent us two odes. She compares a violet to "a blushing maiden" listening to "words love-laden," but hiding the response in her heart.

"At Villeneuve, Lake Lemán," by J. M. M.—The only fault we find with the above is the constant repetition of the words, "the song of to-day." Further, we do not think full justice is done to the subject. The Editor has a lively recollection of Villeneuve—a place to yield much inspiration to a poet, and melt his heart into floods of melody.

"Famine," by Childe Harold (Islington).—So *Childe Harold* is located at Islington at last, and not a bad place for him either. We trust he will accept our congratulations, for undoubtedly he is a singer of some ability. "Famine" is too long, and the measure not perfect.

"Song," by W. E. H.—This song would do well set to music we think. It is rather too sing-songy for our Magazine.

"A Dig at Darwin," by W. D.—Clever, but not very edifying. Our sympathy is with W. D. when he exclaims—

O! who can believe that from ugliest apes,
Still twisting their features in hideous grimaces,
Came beautiful faces and exquisite shapes,
To render these islands the seat of the graces?
Sure I can't bear to think that my own bonnie Mary,
Whose tints blend the red and white roses of June,
The friend of my heart, and my kind household fairy,
Could have for forefather a hairy baboon!

GRANNIE.—We are afraid Grannie is becoming old and feeble. She must write more vigorously. There is no reason to despair.

OWEN MAC.—Many of your lines are really good, but so intermixed with ordinary ones as to make it impossible to insert. Here is a pretty couplet:—

See the bright wavelets stealing,
Like smiles on the silv'ry sand!

J. M. S. (Dartford).—The poems were not of sufficient merit, though deserving in many respects. Stamps received for March issue.

H. E. G. (Lewisham).—Your nicely written book to hand. We regret, however, that the verses are juvenile in tone. A little patient practice is required.

A. A. (Westmoreland).—Thanks for offer. Could you not choose a subject of general interest, and condense your thoughts? Our aim is to fill the "P. M." with poems which, from their theme and handling, shall be useful and pleasant reading for all.

W. R. (Grantham).—Thanks for cheering letter. Probably our Readers can echo your experience when you say—

I knew a wise man—ah! a fool was he.

"Broken Links," by A. E. D. S.—Not containing any special thought, though the versification is good. Should you forward half-a-dozen pieces about the same length, we could probably select one or more for insertion.

"Little Meggie," by M. T.—Still room for improvement. The same thoughts are constantly repeating themselves, clothed in a variety of words.

DUNDEE.—Yes. Covers for Vol. I. can be had. We hope our Readers will bind their numbers. They make an elegant book.

IDLE wants to know *who* is the lady indicated in Tennyson's "Dream of Fair Women," by the line—

I had great beauty; ask thou not my name.

Answer who can.

NOTICE.

The Editor desires to say that he has submitted the poems sent in for competition to a competent circle of friends, who have undertaken to decide upon their merits as speedily as possible. We hope to announce their verdict in the April number. Many capital compositions have come to hand.

ACCEPTED WITH THANKS.—"Betrayed Love," by R. C.; "Angels Unawares," by H. M.; "Lines on some flowers," by D. M. G.

DECLINED WITH THANKS.—"Terpsichore," by G. T.; "Onward."

TO OUR READERS.

While the proprietors will be happy to receive contributions from unknown writers, they are—to prevent the Magazine sinking to the level of an amateur publication—making arrangements with various authors of note, who will, from time to time, furnish poems, and articles on poets and poetry. The main feature of THE POETS' MAGAZINE will be to invite all who possess literary talent to contribute to its pages.

Original contributions only are acceptable.

No Manuscripts can be returned, except by special arrangement.

In all cases where written answers to letters are desired, a directed envelope and two stamps must be enclosed.

As we have received so many letters asking for criticism on enclosures, and have consequently been obliged to engage a co-editor in order to get through the work, we find it necessary to state that any correspondent *who is not a subscriber* to our Magazine, and desires criticism on MSS., either privately or in print, must enclose twelve stamps with each contribution. In all cases where this rule is complied with, a prompt and candid opinion will be given, and a copy of the current number of the Magazine forwarded post free. Should the matter received be first class, we shall, of course, be glad not only to publish but to pay for it.

This rule does not apply to established Authors, whose communications will at all times receive attention.

All who wish the "P. M." sent monthly by post, because they cannot obtain it through a bookseller, can have single copies for seven stamps.

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